Nihil obstat:
JOANNES FITZPATRICK,
Censor Dep.

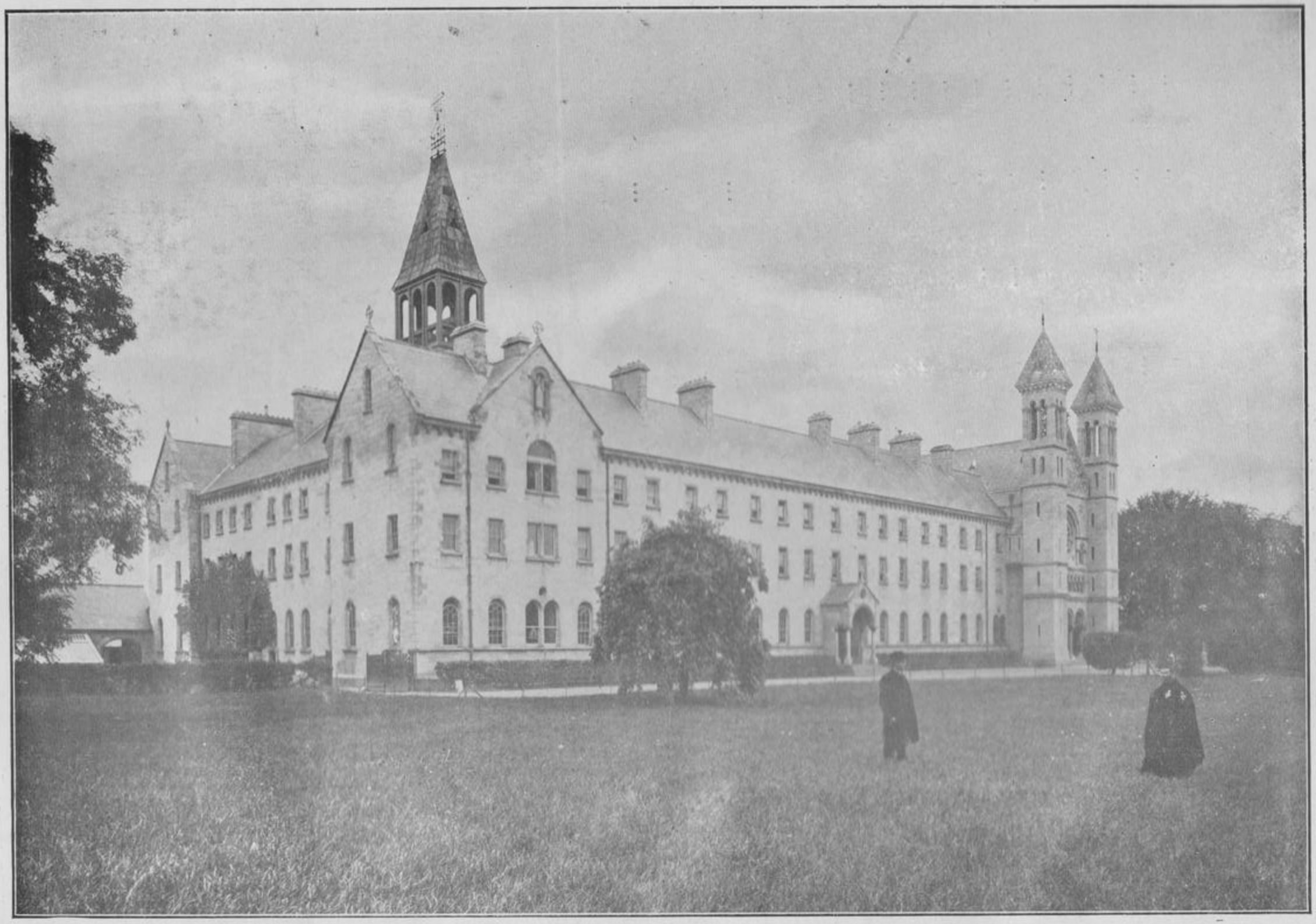
Imprimi Potest:
✠ED. J. BYRNE,
ARCHIEP
DUBLINEN

CONTENTS.

	Page
CHRISTMAS GREETINGS	1
1923—"THE CROSS"—1924	2
THE THEOLOGY OF THE INCARNATION. By Rev. Michael Palmer, C.P.	4
WHEN THE ROSARY HAD BEEN SAID. By P. J. O'Connor Duffy	8
CHRISTMAS: A CHARM IN THE WORLD. By Patrick Walshe, B.A.	11
CHRIS. By Louise M. Stacpoole Kenny	13
SACRIFICIUM DEO (Poem). By Rev. H. E. G. Rope, M.A.	17
THE AVERAGE CATHOLIC MAN. By Rev. Wilfrid Brodie, C.P.	18
THE GHOST OF ROODCROSS. By Magdalen Rock	21
ASTRAL PHENOMENA. By Rev. Leonard Maccabe, C.P.	25
A CHRISTMAS STAR STORY. By M. Barry O'Delany	29
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH—THE "WAY OF LIFE." By Rev. Augustine Monk	33
THE SPECTRE'S SECRET. By Eleanor F. Kelly	38
THE BEATIFICATION OF VEN FR. DOMINIC BARBERI, C.P. By Rev. Urban Young, C.P. ...	47
HOMELESS (Poem). By Lillian M. Nally	48
THE LINK THAT BINDS. By Kitty Fitzgerald	49
BOOK REVIEW	51
In Ainm An Naoiḋeanáin Naoṁṫa. By Ṁuiṛiṛ na Móna	52
FOR OUR YOUNG READERS. By "Francis."	53

ILLUSTRATIONS.

MOUNT ARGUS	Facing Page	1
MOST REV. FR. SYLVIUS, C.P. (Superior-General)	,,	16
VERY REV FR. MALACHY, C.P. (Provincial)	,,	17
VERY REV. FR. SEBASTIAN, C.P. (Rector of Mount Argus)	,,	20
CONTRIBUTORS TO "THE CROSS" I.	,,	21
CONTRIBUTORS TO "THE CROSS" II.	,,	28
CLERICAL CONTRIBUTORS TO "THE CROSS"	,,	29
SAINTLY PASSIONISTS	,,	36
FATHER CHARLES OF MOUNT ARGUS AND GEMMA GALGANI	,,	37
SOME PHOTOS OF OUR PROMOTERS	,,	44
SOME BRADFORD PRIZEWINNERS	,,	45
PRIZEWINNERS FROM ISLINGTON	,,	52
SOME OTHER PRIZEWINNERS	,,	53



ST. PAUL'S RETREAT, MOUNT ARGUS, DUBLIN.

THE CROSS ANNUAL

1923-24.

A Happy Christmas to All!

The near approach of Christmas reminds us of the time-honoured custom of sending good wishes to our friends. This is always a pleasant task—more pleasant than ever this year by reason of their ever increasing number.

For fourteen years the good wishes of those responsible for **The Cross** have been conveyed through its popular and well-known pages. But the great revival of 1923 calls for something better. Since January last our readers have more than trebled! To signalize this wonderful advance, it was decided to break away from old traditions and enter the serried ranks of the **Annuals.** The enthusiasm of our promoters when the announcement was made, and the unbroken stream of applications for copies, bespoke the warmth of the welcome that awaited its appearance.

The coming of **The Cross Annual** is indeed auspicious; its success, even as we write, is more than assured. Like the Magazine of which it is the offspring, it stands alone among its kind.

Through the medium, then, of these new pages, we send to all our readers and friends, known and unknown, the warmest of greetings and the best of good wishes for a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

1923—"THE CROSS"—1924

The unparallelled progress of *The Cross* during the past year has been little short of a revelation. We did not dare to hope, when it appeared in its new form last January, that its success could be so instant and so marvellous. For this we are indebted not only to the practical sympathy and generous support of friends from far and near, but also to the untiring efforts of our loyal and devoted promoters. Each month the list of postal subscribers mounts higher and higher, while the number of voluntary promoters correspondingly increases. The result is a circulation hitherto undreamed of.

In the beginning of the year, we expressed the hope that, with an increased circulation, it might be possible to reduce still further the price of *The Cross ;* but—we reckoned without the printers ! The cost of production is as prohibitive to-day as it was twelve months ago. We must, therefore, nurse this ambition of ours a little longer ; but we assure our readers that it shall not be relinquished till realised. In spite of this temporarily faded hope, however, it cannot be said that we have made no advance. In addition to the many distinguished writers, clerical and lay, who have contributed to our pages during the year, it may be mentioned that while in the early numbers there was but one illustration, since June there have been *five*. These " art insets " add considerably to our expenses ; nevertheless, as long as they are appreciated by our readers, it is our intention to continue them. Another improvement contemplated by us was to increase the number of pages ; but here again an obstacle confronts us. While the postal rates remain as they are, so must the pages of *The Cross*. To add another page or two at the present time would raise the cost of postage from three halfpence to twopence—a serious matter for the great body of our subscribers.

It will be welcome news to all that Fr. Wilfrid has consented to continue his interesting and instructive articles under the title " Facts versus Fallacies." This series leaped into widespread favour with the first contribution, and has secured for the writer many grateful friends.

Our next item of news will not be so welcome. The serial story—" The Heart o' the People "—by Margaret McGarvey, will come to an end with our April issue. This fascinating story of Irish peasant life in romantic Donegal, tinted with sadness and sunshine, has held us spellbound from the beginning. The gifted authoress has given us vivid pen-pictures of rustic Northern life which will long remain a treasured memory ; and there will be real regret when the pages of *The Cross* close upon its final chapter.

But the good fortune which has hitherto attended our efforts to secure the best of Serials for our readers is, we are glad to say, with us still. All will rejoice to learn that the famous Irish novelist—Miss Annie M. P. Smithson, whose recent book (" The Walk of a Queen ") won the first prize in the Irish Novel Competition—has consented to write a new Serial for *The Cross*, which will be introduced with the first number of our fifteenth volume next May. The mere mention of Miss Smithson's name is a sufficient guarantee of the treat that this story holds in store for us, and we are indeed fortunate in being able to count such a distinguished writer among our valued contributors.

Our more studious readers will be pleased to know that many chapters of " In the Land of the Bible " have still to appear. Though a Scriptural exposition of real merit and lasting usefulness—the first

work of its kind in the English language—it is studied each month not only by the Catholic student of Holy Scripture, but, as we have been informed, by many non-Catholics as well. It is to the credit of *The Cross* that its pages have been selected for its first publication. A long residence in the Holy Land has made Fr. Placid a master of his subject; on no occasion has any of his statements been called in question.

We shall, of course, continue to cater for the lovers and learners of our native tongue, by all of whom the page from the pen of Muiris na Mona is highly appreciated.

Reports have frequently come from far and near telling us of the popularity of "Items from our Retreats"—news which we warmly welcomed. During the coming year accounts of the various happenings at our monasteries will be given as far as possible. It may have been noticed from time to time that the news on this page was rather scant, but for this the Editor is not to blame: he publishes each month as much as is sent to him by those responsible for so doing.

The section devoted to the interests of the members of the Archconfraternity will also continue to appear, and in the near future we hope to dwell in brief detail upon the scenes and characters of the Sacred Passion.

St. Gabriel's Guild, we are glad to announce, shows a vast increase in membership and much added enthusiasm among its members. At the beginning of the year the number of young Gabrielites was moderately satisfactory, but now "FRANCIS" finds himself confronted with no small task in coping with the refreshing deluge of correspondence which continues to swell month by month. This is a most gratifying record, and we foresee great activity in the ranks of the Guild during 1924.

We know quite well that the photographs of our contributors will please all our friends. Some are known as regular writers; others have contributed from time to time. *All*, however, have promised to contribute during the coming year.

We regret that it has not been possible to publish the photos of all our promoters and prizewinners; we have, nevertheless, procured a goodly array of which we are very proud.

Once more our hearty thanks go out to all who have helped us through the year, and while so doing we rely upon their continued support in the future.

OUR ADVERTISERS.

It is only fair to our Advertisers to state that, without their co-operation and readiness in placing their advertisements with us, it would be impossible to bring out this Magazine at the modest sum of sixpence. We regard them, one and all, as very practical benefactors.

All the firms whose advertisements appear in "The Cross Annual" are establishments of repute and reliability. We therefore take this welcome opportunity of urging our friends and readers to show their appreciation of this willing and generous help by giving them their custom and recommending them to others as well.

THE RELIGION OF THE INCARNATION.

By REV. MICHAEL PALMER, C.P.

THE chief festive seasons of the year are usually times of special thought and resolution for the fervent Catholic with a view to a more exact practice of his religion. But at Christmastide, when we commemorate the fundamental mystery of Christianity, our reflections may naturally be directed to some of the first principles of our practice.

We are, indeed, complex beings. Complex by nature, for we are composed of a soul with faculties and of a body with senses; complex, again, by reason of the development of these powers: the sane person may possess a keen intelligence but a weak will, or *vice versa*; he may have a perfectly trained ear but lack an artistic eye. Some may have the power of deep thought and strong resolution without the slightest capacity for manual work; others may revel in visible, material things while anything immaterial or abstract makes no appeal to them.

However, this varied mass of humanity we can divide into two broad classes: in one the powers themselves of the soul, in the other sense-perception predominates. The arst class prefers thought, reason, reflection; the second colour, shape, sound.

In human affairs this distinction may lawfully obtain. There will and must always be labourers and tradesmen, professional men and business men; scholars, artists and investigators; and no one would think of imposing an art, trade, science or profession on all. But there is one spiritual occupation which must engage all; the thinker and the talker, the idealist and the sentimentalist, the intellectual and the business man, the principled and the unprincipled, the learned and the ignorant; the various grades of the upper, middle and lower classes—all. The occupation is, of course, religion. And its system and practice must be, in some degree, adapted to all; it must appeal, in some way, to the heterageneous mass if it must be the pursuit of all.

Such is the religion of the Incarnation as expounded by the Catholic Church; such her teaching on the Founder of Christianity and His religious system.

Most men with human minds have set up Christs according to their own ideas. Being human they fall into the two broad classes discussed above: the intellectuals or the thinkers and the sentimtalists; and their characters are reflected in their work. Some have denied the Divinity of Christ; some have denied His sacred humanity. Individuals of one class have granted Him an inferior, partial or temporary divinity: He was God but not of the same divine nature as the Eternal Father; He had not the

fulness of the Godhead, the entire circle of the divine attributes; He "emptied" Himself of them all when He became man. Individuals of the other class have granted Him a humanity variously mutilated: He was man but had no human soul; He had a human soul but no human will; He had a human will but it was not free; He might have been man if His humanity had not been merged in His divine nature.

Their expositions of His religious system are as narrow and one-sided. One set would have men practise only an interior religion as if men were only spirits; in one age they smashed religious statues and pictures; in another they discarded Christ's sacramental system and would receive divine favours, forsooth, only straight from the Holy Spirit Himself. The other set would make religion something very human, tangible and sounding and colourful; they were, and still are, very strong on Christian manhood and brotherhood, on the human character of Christ, on the social virtues; their religious services must be, first and foremost, bright, enlivened by the best music and by sermons delivered only in the choicest language.

Above all these biassed exponents stands the divinely-appointed interpreter, the Catholic Church, expounding the nature of her Divine Founder and His religious system for every type of humanity.

Jesus Christ is not merely man; He is God also—the God-Man. He possesses the fulness of the Godhead, all the divine perfections and attributes; He has a perfect human nature, a body with all its senses, a soul with all its faculties. He is a Divine Personality in whom are radically contained all the attributes of human personality; so He possesses an individual human being, an individual human nature with a powerful, individualistic human character, disposition, manner. His Divinity is invisible but at times during His earthly life He manifests Its power by visible miracles; His humanity was always visible. His doctrine is divine, yet during His incarnate life He clothed it in human language. He notified the bestowal of divine invisible grace by human words.

His religious system, in theory and practice, as expounded by His Church, is in complete harmony with His Incarnation. He founded a visible church with a visible Head as His vicar. That church upholds in its entirety the sacramental system instituted by Him. Of these visible signs the Blessed Sacrament especially has been called a perpetuation of the Incarnation, for in It He still dwells amongst us, with His real body and blood, soul and divinity; yet in a broader sense all the sacraments reflect the divine economy of the Incarnation. They all have a visible element corresponding to the humanity of Jesus; and through these visible channels is conferred divine grace as God came on earth clothed in our human nature. His Church has a complete liturgy, but every

word has a meaning and every action a symbolic signification; it is external, yet not merely external: for though Jesus Christ was human, He was also divine; external yet not melodramatic, for, though He was human, He had a perfectly balanced human nature. Again, His Church advocates vocal prayer as well as mental prayer, for the Master taught His followers to pray in words; yet not merely vocal prayer, for He wished to be honoured with the heart as well as the lips: He was divine and human; He saw the heart and the face of man.

A wonderful God-Man and religion taught by the True Church of God.

But do we Catholics appreciate and practise our religion in its fulness, at least in essentials? By nature we, too, may be ranged in these two classes described above: the thinkers and the sentimentalists, the idealists and the materialists. After our religion has made its appeal, the grace of God seeks not only to uplift but also to broaden our nature. It is to be feared that even amongst Catholics the broad classification made by nature often remains quite marked even in the essentials of religion.

Some unduly stress the external element; they are ruled by sentiment in religion as in the commonplace actions of life; their religion is predominantly body-worship or sense-worship. Their view of Jesus Christ is one-sided; His humanity and exterior actions especially occupy them: they love to consider Him weeping at the tomb of Lazarus, but do not sufficiently ponder on what followed: the loud call and the exercise of divine power. They are ever following Him on the plain, watching Him fondling the little children, giving bread to the tired and hungry multitude; but they do not often enough picture Him standing in the Jordan with the Holy Spirit above His head and the Voice of the Eternal Father thundering in the clouds. They look at Calvary but forget Thabor. An unbalanced practice follows naturally from this one-sided view. They attend Holy Mass and Benediction; both comprise exterior actions appealing to the senses; but do these people reflect that at one ceremony a sacrifice is offered, at the other a blessing given? During a visit to a church they may kneel for half-an-hour before a statue and for half-a-minute before the Blessed Sacrament.

Others are sometimes inclined to disregard the externals of religion. Probably on account of the superficial materialism of modern life they are driven to extend their dislike of things tangible to religion. But the ways of God are not the ways of men; the Church is not the world; religion is not a merely human affair. They must remember that Jesus Christ was human as well as divine; and that the God of the Incarnation can appeal more powerfully to our entire nature than the God of Sinai. The people flocked to hear the words of the God-Man, Jesus Christ; their fathers requested God to speak to

them through Moses. Jesus Christ could be seen; Jehovah was invisible. This type of Catholic should remember that he can visualize the God-Man; and that the imagination, if rightly exercised, even more than the mammon of iniquity, may be made a friend of in the practice of religion. The vision of the versatile personality of Christ now swaying the multitude, now attracting the children, now dominating the hucksters in the temple; the vision of Him (Who was God) as a human companion and friend can help him considerably to visualize the full significance of the God of the Incarnation, Jesus Christ. He will then appreciate the breadth of the religious system of the incarnate God. In ordinary life no one is above taking part at times in physical or external occupation for change and refreshment of mind. So in the practice of religion no one can afford to overlook the benefit of an organisation like a confraternity or of any of the Church's ceremonies which help to maintain the interior spirit.

This is the broad religion of the Incarnation. In short, an appeal to all mankind, to every type and class and nation; an uplifting to a higher life; a broadening at least in essentials of the natural narrowness of all; a restraining and balancing of every natural power within us. A complete unbiassed view of Jesus Christ showing the wonderful divine economy of the Incarnation. A religion not vague and abstract, but clear-cut and concrete; capable of counteracting and at the same time exposing the gross materialism of our day; a religion that is not a wild mysticism unintelligible to the multitudes nor a melodramatic show repulsive to the few. A service neither cold nor calculating nor merely sentimental. A religion inspiring and preparing every power of body and soul for the eternal glorification of both.

THE QUIET HOUR.

By MAISIE MORTELL.

To my friend I come at eventide
In the twilight's kindly shade,
Whilst the blackbird thrills his mellow notes
In the nearby verdant glade;
And my soul is bathed in holy light,
And my heart throbs loud with joy
As I nestle in his loving arms
While the stars peep out on high.

And I hear each beat of Jesus' Heart
As I rest in His embrace,
He unfolds His sufferings of the day
And the tears steal down His face,
But around His neck my arms entwine
And I wipe the tears away,
And He smiles with love and gratitude
As the shadows round us play.

WHEN THE ROSARY HAD BEEN SAID.

By P. J. O'CONNOR DUFFY.

COLM was resting on the sofa with a book in his hand. The book was shut on his forefinger, at a page which he had found less interesting than his vivid recollections of the hurling match. His eyes, too, were closed, so that he seemed to sleep, but the dark-lashed lids flickered half-open at intervals, or a little smile came with some remembrance, some clear visioning of a fragment of the grand game it had been, and his wholesome boy's face was lit by it. Resting was pleasant.

Across the room, Una and Maire were seated near the fire. The Rosary had been said scarcely fifteen minutes ago, and the girls' beads hung yet from their fingers, shining when the firelight struck upon them as they swayed to and fro. Colm had been looking at Una's just before closing his eyes. They were of clear red beads, cut like jewels, and as they dropped between his eyes and the fire, the light shone through them, so that they sparkled like rubies, with a fine, rich glow that he admired.

In the midst of his reflections on incidents of that afternoon's splendid game, Colm became suddenly aware that Una and Maire were speaking of Christmas. It reminded him for an instant of the gifts he had hidden upstairs, anticipating the giving of which brought him an agreeable little quiver of excitement. He opened his eyes, glancing across at his two sisters, with an expression that was quite eloquent of a boy's respect and love. They were both older than he, Maire, the eldest, being nineteen, and rather like a mother to him. She was very clever and wise and good, he thought. She was going to be a nun. Una was seventeen, and very helpful at games.

He watched them happily for a little while, and then his eyes closed again, and he lay quite still, his thoughts hovering around a shining central thought that was Christmas, and his chief emotion one of utter contentment, while he listened to the girls' voices. He could hear Maire's more distinctly than Una's. Now and then he heard neither, perhaps because the singing of the wind in the trees outside the window was like the sound of the sea. He thought of it as a surge of sound in which the voices were at times lost. And it was restful, too, like a song that would bring sleep.

"It will be Christmas," Una said, "when the clock strikes twelve . . . three hours . . . We shall hear the Christmas bells ringing . . ."

It was at this point that Colm began to listen. He heard Maire's voice, which had always a quality of decision that he liked, a quality that suggested strength, and inspired confidence.

"But," she said, "it will not be

Christmas then . . not until twenty-five minutes later . . . In England, of course, in London . . . but not at home here . . . because of the change in the time . . . And Christmas will come in Ireland . . . according to Ireland's time."

"But the bells," said Una, "the church bells . . . the bells of the clock-towers . . ringing . . . . ringing."

"Why, yes. Ringing with glad tidings of great joy. O, I always love to hear the Christmas bells . . . like a prayer in the night. And a prayer is beautiful at any time, isn't it? We'll be standing . . . at the very threshold of Christmas . . . To think of all . . . of all who will be waiting . . . It is . . . like the long, long waiting . . . four thousand years . . . before He came . . . A great silence, and then . . . the bells . . . the prayers . . . the Canticles . . . the Magnificats . . Una . . . like the music of the choirs above the hills where the Shepherds were keeping watch . . . "

"'Tis not of that time we'll be thinking . . . "

"Time? Time will be less than a thought then . . . The Birthday of Christ . . . The memories . . . Born in a cave that was a stable, and cradled in the cold straw of the manger . . . with the breath of an ox and an ass to make the night air warm for Him . . . the bitter chill of the winter midnight . . . And He was . . . God . . . "

There was a little space of silence. To Colm it seemed that the moaning of the trees had grown much louder. He looked for a moment across the room. Maire and Una were leaning towards the fire, gazing into the red heart of it. They were very still. He could see only Maire's face. It looked grave, and yet there was a calm happiness upon it, a gentleness of expression that he thought most lovable. He closed his eyes, and saw it still, with the hearth-light on its loveliness, like a shining flower in his imagination. And in the silence her words formed themselves again and again: "The bitter chill of the winter midnight . . . And He was . . . God."

There had been a peculiar suggestion of awe in her voice, especially in the clear, low tone in which the last four words were uttered, that brought the boy a strange sense of solemnity; and as he dwelt upon the lingering words, the homely room, with its delicate lights and its sweet atmosphere of peace, became in his eyes a kind of sanctuary, a hushed place for reverent thoughts of mysteries. And he was very, very glad that he had been at Confession that evening; very joyous of soul to remember that he would be receiving Holy Communion in the morning. Then he heard Una speak again, quite unexpectedly, it seemed to Colm.

"I always think . . a stable is a holy place . . poverty is a holy .

thing . . If I had a stable, I should make it a shrine . . with little statues somewhere in it . . as a memory . . especially of Christmas . . like the grotto in the wood at St. Dympna's."

"There *are* places Una . . in . Spain, in Italy, in the Tyrol, I think . . the Catholics have such customs . . They are simple and pious and beautiful customs . . like the making of a Crib, or the lighting of a Christmas candle, or the open door for whoever may pass by, in an Irish home . . . There is a graciousness about them all."

"Yes—a graciousness . . It is the divine grace of God shining through the thongs of the world . . . Isn't it Maire? The beauty of God in everything that is good . . And in the Christmas things, I think, somehow · It would be very clear indeed . . . Christmas seems to purify my thoughts · . . to make them more spiritual, Maire . . . I can see into beautiful things very clearly . . . It seems to cast a light to me across the winter days long before it comes."

"It is much the same with me . . . I am sure it is so with everybody . . . Yesterday evening, when Colm and I were out walking, we saw Brigid Clandillon in the byre, milking . . . It was dusk . . . The lantern hung inside the open door . . . Inside, it was all shadowy . . . The light was feeble . . . It was a sombre kind of place · . . gloomy, like a cave . . . . The cattle stood up in a thin grey haze like . . . like big dim figures of mystery . . . That is just how it looked to me, Una . . . . mysterious . . . And I *did* think of the Stable of Bethlehem . . . And when Brigid came to the doorway . . . I do not know why . . . but with the lantern light on her sad face . . and because it is the Christmas-time . . I thought of the Madonna . . . and pictured two others within . . . "

(Colm remembered vividly that as he passed by he had felt a desire to go into the big old byre to see the cows being milked, and to talk with Micil Clandillon, who captained the McDonagh Football Club, and was a great authority on fishing-tackle.)

"Christmas brings a million glad thoughts," said Una.

"And sad thoughts, wistful little thoughts, too. For it is a dividing-place; a great solemn white mark set in time and in memory . . We reckon the happenings between one Christmas and the next . . And there are sometimes sad happenings and sad memories of them . . But there is beauty . . there is sanctity . . in even the . simplest associations . . They are honour . . they are reverence . . Indeed, there is an act of adoration in each one of our Christmas customs . ."

"Birthday gifts for a child they are · (Colm opened his eyes suddenly and looked across at Una; but of course it had not been Maire's voice) brought with the faith of little children . . . . And Christmas in Ireland . . . "

"Oh . . . it *is* Christmas . . , It is custom given a divine soul . . . It is Faith, Una . . . It is Christ's Mass."

"The festival we love the best of all," said Una. "It is the coming of the Holy Family to the hearths of Catholic Ireland . . . And over each lintel a prayer. Una . . Go Dtigidh Do Rioghacht."

"Go Brath . . And the hearths in Bethlehem," said Una, "the hearths in Bethlehem . . if Bethlehem had . known . . . "

"Maire!" a voice came abruptly from the doorway, and a child, with flaxen hair and slumber in her bright eyes, entered the room to say good-night. "Did you tell Kevin," said he, "that Thanta Clauthe will come in *a car of gold* with sicht reindeers in the sky? 'Cauthe you didn't tell *me* the car of gold."

Colm listened for a little while to the discussion that arose between Maire and Declan. Then :

"To-morrow," he said to himself, "will be Christmas Day."

And he thought, not of Santa Claus, but of Brigid Clandillon standing at the door of the cattle-shed, and of what Maire had thought, and of what he had thought as they passed it. And that Christmas for Colm was, to use his sister's words, "A great, solemn white mark" set in the memory of a boy—and deep in the heart of a man.

CHRISTMAS : A CHARM IN THE WORLD.

By PATRICK WALSHE, B.A.

"Cette crèche est une école,
Ou ce très—divin Enfant,
Sans accent et sans parole,
Peut rendre l'homme savant."

CHRISTMAS always comes with its promise, with its exhortation to cast worries to the wind, to rejoice in happy anticipations. At the approach of the holy season a great buoyancy comes into our lives, a refreshing exhilaration, a hopeful rejuvenescence. And from the despotism of the world, from the endless struggle to maintain existence a rest is necessary, a lull in the strife, a bright interval of joy and peace. In the great festival there is a perennial charm. A soothing calm seems to come over the world—the spirit of benign freedom and security, a blessing half metaphorically expressed by the poet.

"And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad,
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,

No fairy takes, nor witch has power to
charm ;
So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

Christmas is no ordinary anniversary with stereotyped customs, with seductive feasts and merriment—it is part of the civilization of the world, the continued enfranchisement of mankind. Heaven comes near enough to cast its influence over our lives, to make us more amiable and tender, more open to the gentle persuasion of our human kinship. The poorest Christian feels some spell on the earth, some relief, some message from the past to cheer and console. A grand encouraging poetry seems to fill the world, to bring back the simplicity and hope of the shepherds listening to the Angels' song.

" Le croiriez-vous, il est dans une
étable
De ce pays, dessus un peu de foin ;
. . . . . Fils incomparable :
Ne tardons pas d'en aller prendre
soin."

The joyous festival encourages all, and comes like an annual proof of Christianity, of the advent of God Himself to guard and bless human lives. For a time men are entirely independent of the world, fascinated with the story and wonders of the first Christmas Night, and happy as the beneficiaries in a boundless spiritual legacy.

During those bright days Religion seems very potent, a ruling force, the government of mankind. It proclaims a world-wide freedom, a great christian Sabbath, an unfettered opportunity to welcome, worship and praise the Creator. Then Faith celebrates its triumph in the homage of nations, in exultant music and ceremonies, in the joy and happiness of millions. Christmas is a splendid gift to men, a check to the grasping materialism of the world, an encouragement to the noble impulses of our nature.

" Approchez-vous de Sa crèche
Avares, ambitieux ;
Ecoutez ce que vous préche
Ce Maître venu de Cieux."

The Christmas bells ring over the troubled world like a greeting from God, like an inspiration to let love and co-operation sway men into an enduring brotherhood. From place to place come messages of affection, wishes that hope and joy may brighten the coming future. Gifts, too, are sent to dispel gloom from sorrowing hearts, to relieve the helpless, to show that the reign of Christ could be the real golden age which noble ones hoped for and inspired ones sung of.

Christmas awakens all that is generous and great in the hearts of men. It brings freshness, beauty and courage into the world. And so

" The world revolves from day to day
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men."

"CHRIS."

By LOUISE M. STACPOOLE KENNY.

IT was Christmas Eve. It was not, however, an ideal Christmas Eve, not the snow-white, frosty, glistening Christmas Eve beloved of poets and novelists, and generally depicted in glowing colours on picture-cards and illustrated papers. As a matter of fact, it was the sort of Christmas most prevalent in Green Erin—a green Christmas—the kind that croakers tell us fill the churchyards, but is, nevertheless, very pleasant and very delightful, though after all, come fine or stormy weather, come hail or snow, or balmy winds and bright sunshine, Christmas is always pleasant and delightful. It brings such happy memories, such joyful meetings, it brings bright faces, glad laughter, kind greetings, good cheer, but above all and before all, it appeals to everyone of us, because it is the birthday of our little Jesus, the Son of God.

In a big, spotlessly clean kitchen, in a comfortable farmhouse at Carrowduff, on each side of a blazing turf fire, sat a man and a woman, staring into the leaping flames. They were no longer young, and they bore upon their creased and wrinkled faces, and upon their toil-worn and knotted hands the marks of strenuous work, of daily, nay, hourly toil.

The man had clean-cut features, and was dark-skinned, dark-eyed, clean shaven, with a somewhat stern and forbidding expression, his protruding chin and under-lip denoting obstinacy and narrow-mindedness.

His wife was a cheerful little body, brown-haired, rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed. Long practice had made her ever ready with a smile, and the soft word that ever turneth away wrath; and indeed, if she had not possessed a blithe, contented mind, she would never have survived thirty years of married life with grim Christopher Sheehan. Not only had she survived—she had kept, through fair and foul days, her unfailing good humour; her cheerful spirits and her confident faith and hope in a guiding and protecting Providence.

She held a long Rosary of horn in her hands, and was telling her beads, fingering them lovingly one by one, and as she finished each Hail Mary, she breathed a name—the name of her absent son—Chris Sheehan.

The man muttered as he caught the name, "You are praying for him—for the ungrateful——"

She raised her rough brown hand. "It's Christmas time, Christopher," she said gently, "and why should I not pray for our boy, when——"

"Your boy," he growled, "he's no boy of mine. I have disowned him, the dirty spalpeen."

"Why should I not pray for him," she continued, not heeding the interruption, "when the angels are singing peace and good-will, when Our Blessed Lord——"

Again the man interrupted, this time with brutal insistence. "Stow that, Katey," he thundered, rising from his seat, his face distorted with rage. "Haven't I told you a hundred times not to mention his name—and is it a sermon you are by way of preaching me? It's bad enough to listen to the priest discoursing, let alone to have me wife dinning it into my ears."

He stooped over the fire, lifted a sod, shaded it with his hand while he lighted a discoloured clay pipe. Then he noisily puffed and blew clouds of grey smoke into the air.

Mrs. Sheehan endeavoured to suppress a cough. Thirty years of tobacco saturated atmosphere had not accustomed her to its heavy odour, it still had power to irritate her throat, bring the water to her eyes and make her cough.

Christopher heard the stifled sound and turned on her furiously. "Botheration to the woman," he vociferated, "one would think it was a fine lady ye were Katey, instead of a hard-working wench, the wife of a hard-working farmer. What fault do ye find with me smoking?"

"None, Chris dear," his wife answered meekly.

She went over to the polished oak table and proceeded to cover it with a snow-white cloth and to lay cups, saucers, and plates. Her husband eyed her in astonishment. "In the name of all that's wonderful," he asked in tones of perplexity, "what for are ye laying the table at nigh eleven o'clock of the night."

He glanced towards a curiously carved antique grandfather clock standing in a corner. "It's five minutes to eleven and——"

"I'm going to make a cup of tea," she said briefly. As she spoke she lifted the kettle from the hob and poured the boiling water into a brown earthenware tea-pot.

"But ye don't want four cups and saucers and four plates, do ye" he questioned with rough hilarity. "Faix, it's dotty ye are getting, Katey me girl. Ye know I wouldn't touch a drop of tea at this hour, and whose to drink out of all them cups, eh?"

"I am getting ready for the Christmas guests," she answered dreamily.

"Christmas guests?" he echoed stupidly.

"Yes, Mary and Chris and——"

"What in thunder do ye mane? Is it crazy ye are?" he asked in mingled bewilderment and anger. "Sure thay are thousands of miles away in Australia. Leastways that's what I heard ye telling Father O'Grady last time we had a Station here."

There was a far-away look in her eyes, the Rosary was twisted round her wrist;

she raised the cross and kissed it fervently.

Then she crooned in a sing-song voice :

" At night I sit beside the hearth
And watch the glowing sod ;
I tell my beads and say a name
That's known to me and God.

" That's surely known to me and God,
For every night and day
I call a blessing on the one
That travels far away.

" That travels far away itself
To earn a stranger's gold ;
May God's love be a mantle now
To shield him from the cold.

" To one whose heart is hot and young
The thought of home is dear.
O Heart of Christ, shield him I love
And hold him warm and near.

" Be shelter through the long dark night
Wherever he may be ;
Send thoughts of Ireland through his dreams
And keep him true to me."

The man gasped. " Sure it's crazy she is entirely," he commented. " Reciting poetry—and—oh, but Katey, asthore, come here and sit beside me, and if I could I'd make friends with Chris, just to please ye, core of me heart."

Her dull eyes sparkled, her worn face brightened—" Chris "—there was joyful expectancy in her soft voice.

The man shook his head. " I can't, Katey me dear," he said with finality. " I can't forgive Chris, there's something inside me won't let me. Oh, wisha ! wisha ! why did he marry that feckless lass——? "

" There was nothing agin her, save that her father lost all his money, and she hadn't a penny," interrupted his wife vehemently. " When they were well-to-do ye were keen enough on the match, and then when they came to grief ye gave them the go-by, and ye wanted Chris to do the same, but he was too honourable, me generous boy——"

" Honourable ! " sneered Christopher, and he walked towards the door, he opened it, and looked out into the darkness.

Nothing disturbed the stillness, it was a calm, moist night ; the stars shone with subdued radiance in a sky of darkest blue.

" It will be a soft morning, thank God," said the woman leaning over his shoulder ; " a wind from the south and no rain. Sure it's wonderful. Praise be to God and His Blessed Mother. It's the pleasant walk the neighbours and ourselves will have to-morrow morning going to early Mass."

" Step in and take your tea," ordered her husband gruffly, " or it will be too late for you to do so. Sure ye are going to Holy Communion aren't ye ? "

" And you Chris ? " she asked wistfully.

The man glared. " It's none of yer business " he spluttered, but under her

steady gaze he reddened beneath his tanned skin.

At that moment a slender, graceful figure stepped lightly across the grass, and opening the little gate, glided up the short, narrow path to the open door of the cottage. She carried something in her arms, and as she crossed the threshold she dropped the heavy black shawl from her head and shoulders, and stood white robed, golden haired, rose complexioned, holding a golden-haired, rose complexioned baby close to her heart.

She smiled upon it, and as she smiled her exquisite face grew inexpressively tender.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God," gasped the man, staring at this lovely vision open-eyed and open-mouthed.

Katey also gasped for an instant, then a slow smile flickered across her face, "Mary," she whispered softly.

The lovely apparition nodded. "And little Christy," she added, smiling down upon the child in her arms.

"And——" Katey's eyes held an eager unspoken appeal, again Mary nodded and pointed in the direction of the hay shed.

Christopher had recovered from his amazement. He came forward, blustering, threatening, "So it's you," he shouted, "Mary Moriarty——"

"Mary Sheehan" she corrected serenely.

A heavy scowl weighed down the man's shaggy brows. "Don't I know it, worse luck," he growled. "There's no nee for ye to throw it in me face, that y are me son's wife—but I have swor ye shall never cross me threshold."

"I have crossed it" she answere with a little nervous laugh, and sh stooped and kissed the baby in her arm as though the touch of his soft mout would give her courage.

"I have sworn by the Holy Virgin the Blessed Mother of God, that yo shall never taste bit or sup under m roof" continued Christopher Sheeha with the quiet intensity of concentrate determination.

Mary flashed a half indignant, ha scared glance at his stern set face, an frowning brows. She crossed herself whispered a prayer, and then with mil reproof:—"Do not dare, Christophe Sheehan, to mention the blessed nam of the Holy Mother of God in con nection with your own wicked oaths—"

She hesitated, with a quick hal defiant gesture, sat down at the liberally plenished table, and very deliberatel poured out a little tea into a cup, milke and sugared it and finally sipped it, a the same time taking a slice of home made brown bread, and endeavoured t eat it.

She did succeed in swallowing a mouth ful, though she felt it might choke he for there was a big lump in her throa and her heart was pulsing and throbbin in a quite amazing way.

Christopher gasped, too stupified b

MOST REV. FR. SYLVIUS, C.P.

Superior-General of the Passionists.

VERY REV. FR. MALACHY, C.P.

Provincial.

the audacity of her actions to endeavour to stop her.

She rose, gave a deep sigh, and looked straight into the man's angry eyes, said very quietly, though with a touch of suppressed triumph : " I have eaten and drunk under your roof, Christopher Sheehan, and I wish my boy—your grandson—to eat and drink. He is nearly a year old, and he is hungry and thirsty and, oh, so heavy ! I can't hold him and at the same time boil the milk and crumb the bread for him. You will hold him."

She thrust the baby towards the astonished man.

Involuntarily Christopher held out his arms and little Christy leaped into them. He twined his soft, chubby arms round his grandfather's thick neck ; he pressed his dewy mouth against his grandfather's rugged face ; he said in a clear voice " Chris."

He had often heard his mother call his father by that name. He had heard it oftener than any other word, and thus in some mysterious way he lisped it at the crucial moment.

" Chris."

Christopher Sheehan held little Christy close to his wildly beating heart ; to hear his own name thus strangely uttered by his grandson touched some chord in his nature. Baby fingers, a baby's voice pressed all the anger and the badness out of that heart. He had said something which prevented him from forgiving his son, but that son's son, by the potent spell of one spoken word destroyed that something once and for ever.

" Chris," cooed the clear voice.

Christopher kissed the soft mouth, and from that moment his love for little Christy was more than his love for anyone else on earth.

* * *

On Christmas morning four radiantly happy people knelt side by side in the chapel at Carrowduff. Side by side, Christopher Sheehan and Katey, Chris and Mary, adored the Divine Majesty ; side by side they breathed the air that was indeed the air of Paradise.

" Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will ! "

SACRIFICIUM DEO.

By REV. H. E. G. ROPE, M.A.

Still dreaming sacrifices yet to make,
  Still planning gifts of choice and form mine own,
Sudden unaskt occasions overtake,
  I stagger and my gifts are overthrown.

Teach me to stand unshaken whensoe'er,
  Like stormwind swooping on an inland sea,
Unsought, unguess'd, unplann'd for, unaware,
  The cross, that else were none, is laid on me.

THE AVERAGE CATHOLIC MAN.

By REV. WILFRID BRODIE, C.P.

IT does not require an expert in things political, social or economic, to realise that the age in which we live is one of Democracy. Even one with a very superficial knowledge of current events can readily see that vital matters of daily existence, such as government, education and the like, are largely dependent on the will of the people. In religious matters, also, this is, to a great extent, true. The Catholic Church, like every other properly constituted society, must always have rulers and guardians, and, moreover, the Supreme Ruler and Guardian of the inherited possession of Divine Truth, namely, Christ's Vicar, the Pope.

But, for all that, the preservation and spread of the True Faith, the extension of the Kingdom of Christ in the world, the Catholic outlook of countries, parishes and individuals, these fall more and more upon " the average man," whose power both for good and evil is seldom sufficiently realised, even by himself.

It is at once both a duty and a privilege of the ordinary Catholic layman not merely to sanctify his own soul, but to realise, as well, that he is a member of that society established by Christ for the salvation of humanity. This society, like its Founder, is both divine and human ; divine in mission and teaching ; human as being composed of human beings, and engaged in a constant warfare not only against " the spirits of wickedness " but also against human agents of Satan in the world.

We scarcely need the words of Holy Scripture to remind us that " man's life on earth is a warfare." The slightest effort to be honest with ourselves and generous with God brings sufficient evidence of this fact. Christ's Church is not a sort of " spiritual hot-house," but it is a *militant* society, God's army fighting for His glory and triumph, *in* this world, although not *of* this world. The average Catholic man, then, whatever be his station in life, who loses sight of this fact, imagining that his religion is to be confined to a selfish Individualism (which is quite a different thing from Individuality), who thinks that if he succeeds in saving his own soul without interesting himself in the activities of Catholicism, such a one is not, in the full sense of the term, an active soldier of Christ's militant society. The words of the poet—" they also serve who only stand and wait "—are true only of those whom some natural infirmity impedes from a life of activity, but they cannot be taken as a general rule for those who have talent and ability to take part in these societies and organisations which the Church fosters for the spread of sanctity, charity and truth amongst men.

We have reason to rejoice that Catholic organisations exist and flourish in these days of Mammon-worship and greed. There is, for example, the world-famed Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the work of whose members can be adequately registered only in the "Book of Life." Imbued with the charity of Him Whose life on earth was spent not only for the redemption of souls, but also with a view of lessening the corporal sufferings of humanity, the members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society begrudge neither time nor energy towards the continuance of Christ's labours of love amongst the poor who are always dear to His Sacred Heart.

Again, we have the "Catholic Young Men's Society." In many places it exists, and wherever it is to be found, the splendid organisation, the sincere, unselfish enthusiasm of its members, and the untold effects for good it achieves in a parish, are facts of which Catholicism may be justly proud.

There are societies, too, instituted to guard against loss of Faith. The members hear of those whose religion is on the decline. They strive to bring them to the Sacraments, helping them to realise that although they may, perhaps, be human failures, it does not follow that they are outcasts from their Heavenly Father's Home. By such practical means as good literature, Catholic clubs and amusements, these lay apostles of Christ succeed in re-enkindling the smouldering embers of an active faith.

The Catholic Truth Society, which is indeed a vital necessity in this age of falsehood and deceit, is one of the many other organisations in which the average layman can show a solid enthusiasm for the interests of Religion.

The reference already made to the Catholic Young Men's Society suggests a few words as to amusements, which form part of the activities of its members. Christ's religion makes ample provision for lawful pleasures. Mindful of how the World's Redeemer wrought His first miracle to provide wine for the merry-makers at Cana, Catholic organisers realise that a certain amount of pleasure, such as games, music, etc., is not a hindrance, but rather a powerful aid for those who are striving to "serve God in gladness." Is it not a pleasing and inspiring thing to see Catholic men assembling in their "C.Y.M.S." Club on the winter's evenings, to enjoy a few hours of well-earned enjoyment, taking part in the pastimes arranged by the Society, such as concerts, whist-drives, billiards, and other beneficial amusements? Many branches of the Society have enlarged their sphere of activities, in this respect, by producing football clubs and other outdoor games. These things show that the Catholic average man is a social being, eager to uphold that organised Catholicism which proves such a powerful weapon against the seductions of Satan.

Furthermore, in doing so he is proving his worth as a citizen, for the well-being

of a nation depends not altogether on such things as army and commerce. Rather, when all is said and done, it depends largely on the happiness, virtue and contentment of those "average" people, the "men in the street," who rub shoulders with one another day by day. "Whatever makes for their good or contributes towards their progress, that is national prosperity, and that alone."

Catholic young men! Group yourselves together in some Catholic organisation, if you have hitherto kept aloof in a selfish Individualism! Remember that just as "the citizen who has merely hugged his citizenship to himself, who has enjoyed all the privileges he can get, and paid nothing for them—least of all, himself—who has, so to say, 'gained the whole world,' has simultaneously lost himself indeed and is forgotten within a year of his death," so, too, a Catholic should avoid a selfish Individualism. An active, enthusiastic soldier of Christ's militant society has activities not solely on his own behalf. He realises that he, as a member of a living, energetic organisation, has a mission, an apostolate to perform—the privilege and duty of aiding in the salvation of other souls, and the spreading of Christ's Kingdom in this world of struggle and strife. Each can do his share, small though that share may seem. It will be done for God, and nothing which is done for Him is really small.

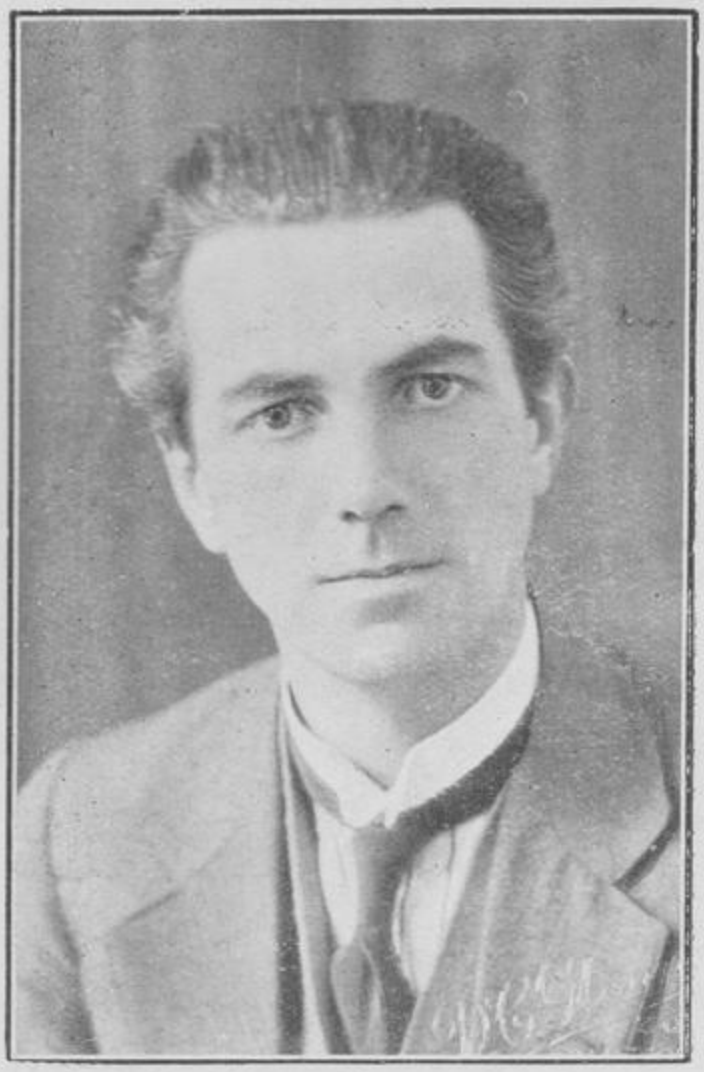
And if, through certain circumstances, active membership of such societies be impossible, help and encouragement is, at least, in the power of all. There are many laymen who think nothing of spending themselves and being spent in the interests of Catholicism; all praise is due to them and God's blessing is surely theirs. But the percentage is very small, while the number of those who say, if not in words, at least by indifference, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is pitifully large.

To those who have been thus active agents of good we say: Keep steadily on! Much remains still to be achieved! Brightly and manfully continue your noble work! Hand in hand, heart to heart, advance for the glory of God and the interests of His Church! Thus shall you continue to be apostles of Christ, for "she, as the coherent and organic mystical Body of Christ, calls upon those who look to her to become, not merely her children, but her very members, not to obey her as soldiers obey a leader or citizens a government, but as the hands and eyes and feet obey a brain." United in and for Catholicism, you will march forward undaunted by obstacles and difficulties. "Unity is strength," and unity with Christ's Church begets the strength which overthrows the enemies of souls!

Lastly, to those who have been sleeping the sleep of Indifferentism regarding Catholic activity, we may say in the words of Our Divine Master: "Young man, I say to thee, arise!"

VERY REV. FR. SEBASTIAN, C.P.
Rector of Mount Argus.

CONTRIBUTORS TO "THE CROSS."

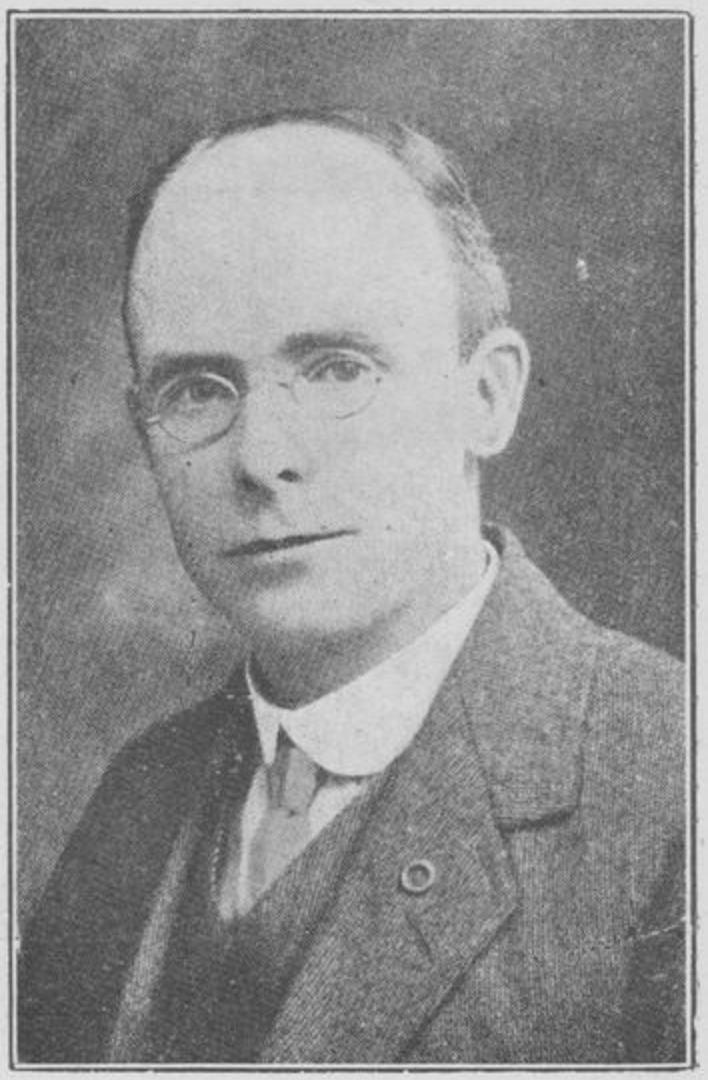


P. J. O'CONNOR DUFFY.

Photo by D. C. GLENN]

PATRICK WALSHE, B.A.

J. MULVENNA.



"MUIRIS NA MONA."

THE GHOST OF ROODCROSS.

By MAGDALEN ROCK.

ELINOR BOHUN had sat patiently and still while her brother, Michael, made a hearty meal off the cold meat, home- manufactured bread, and tea. When the tired-looking, elderly man pushed back his chair from the table and lit his favourite pipe she put a question.

"Well, Michael, what compensation was allowed?"

"Little beyond what will pay the lawyers; the government lawyers tried to make it out that the burning of the stables and cattle sheds was an accident."

"You won't appeal?"

"Only waste of money, my dear, when the defendants are the judges."

Elinor nodded assentingly. She was much younger than her brother who had been designed in his youth for the Church. An accident in the football field had left one leg stiff and rather shorter than the other, and the early death of his parents had left him owner of a large farm in the glens of Antrim. He had not been actively engaged in the Sinn Fein movement, owing perhaps to his infirmity, but he had given the cause sympathy and financial support. Neither he nor his sister had any doubt as to whom had fired stables and byres, and rather than begin the work of rebuilding and re-purchasing fresh stock the twain had resolved to emigrate. The acres of the farm had already been sold to a neighbouring farmer.

"I'm afraid it would not be wise to go to either Canada or Australia, Michael. The money would not be enough to start farming on a proper scale, and besides we are no longer young." Elinor smiled and the smile lit up her hazel eyes and showed a dimple still lurking about her mouth.

"I have thought we were too old for new countries," Michael agreed.

"Then what would you think of this?" Elinor rose and took from a drawer of an old desk a letter and a newspaper. "These came to-day from Hilda Remy who is teaching, you know, in England. Hilda says that farms of land are selling at low prices round Little Upton where she is teaching. Several farms are advertised to sell or let in the Upton Reporter. You can have a look at the advertising columns while I clear up."

Michael drew his chair nearer the fire and studied the columns Elinor's friend had pencilled. When his sister returned to her seat with a sock in her hand and began to ply her needles he observed :—

"Many of the holdings seem attractive on paper."

"It wouldn't cost much to go across to England," Elinor suggested, and her brother pondered.

"All right," he at last announced deceisively. "There's a farm called Roodcross to let or sell. The name

sounds attractive. Funny if the Bohuns go back after long centuries to England."

It was a tradition of the family that the Bohuns—they were de Bohuns then —had crossed to Ireland " in Strongbow's van." Anyhow they had remained faithful to the old religion, though for generations back the head of the family had tilled his lands and sowed and reaped like the surrounding farmers.

A week later Michael and his sister were interviewing the lawyer and later the auctioneer entrusted with the sale of Roodcross. The former smiled at Elinor's enthusiasm over the house which Michael and she had visited on the previous day.

" I can't know why the former owners sold such a dear old house."

" Perhaps they craved for modernity, for electrical lighting, and society. Roodcross is in a lonely situation," Mr. Oldham said.

" Oh, we shouldn't mind oil lamps or loneliness," Elinor cried, and old as he was the lawyer noted the reddish brown hair and the dimple in her ivory pale cheek with a little admiration.

" We are not asking a high price for the farm," he observed. " And the land is good."

" But why has it not sold ? " Michael asked. " We were told yesterday that no one remains long at Roodcross."

" Well," said the lawyer, " since you are certain to hear the old tale I may as well tell you that Roodcross is supposed to be haunted."

" How lovely ! " Elinor cried. " I thought it ought. The house is very old."

Mr. Oldham nodded.

" It was built for a younger son of the Dudley family in the time of Henry VII. In the reign of his successor, the Dudley of the time was rewarded for his support of the suppression of the religious houses by many gifts. His wife, poor woman, was horrified at the doings of her lord and master, and once in his absence she gave shelter to a priest who was also her cousin. Spies were about and Robert Dudley hastened home, and found the old priest celebrating Mass. He put him to death with his own sword. The spirit of the priest is said to have been often seen. Of course," the lawyer hastened to say, " I don't believe in spirits or suck like. All the same the story is believed in many quarters, Miss Bohun."

" Even if there be a spirit, I'm sure it won't work us any ill," Elinor again smiled.

" My sister is an enthusiast," Michael remarked. " The big living-room with its open fireplace and oaken panelling delighted her. She refuses to think of the cost of firing and of making repairs."

" Of course the house is practically what it was in Tudor days," Mr. Oldham said, " but it has been well cared for. In the rooms above improvements have been effected."

" Will you give us till to-morrow to consider purchasing it ? " Michael rose. " We will pay Roodcross another visit."

" Miss Bohun will only lose her heart to the house," the old lawyer smiled.

"Oh, yes, certainly, our offer holds good till to-morrow."

The brother and sister accompanied by Hilda Remy visited Roodcross that evening. Hilda was as enthusiastic as Elinor over the old house.

"And the price of the farm is ridiculously low," said Hilda. "Besides it will be delightful for me to spend a week-end with Elinor now and then."

"You will always be welcome," Michael said.

In six or seven weeks the Bohuns were in possession of Roodcross. It chanced that on the day of their settling in, Michael had to pay a visit to London where he would be detained for the night. The Irish servant who had been in the employment of the family for years had lingered in the metropolis to see a sister's child.

"I wish Mary had come along direct," Michael remarked.

"Oh, she will arrive on the evening train. Hurry, Michael, or you will miss your train."

"You won't be lonely or afraid?"

"Goodness! Have you ever known me either?"

During the remaining hours of the wintry day Elinor was busy settling things. As the darkness fell she lit the big brass lamps in the old living-room, put the kettle on to boil in preparation for the advent of Mary Boyle, and added a few logs to the fire. Still Mary did not come, and at last Elinor decided that she must have missed the train.

"However, I'll just say the Rosary before I get too sleepy," she thought, and then pulled out her beads. She was very wearied, the glow from the fire was comforting, and by-and-by she fell asleep.

When she woke the fire was only a mass of reddish cinders, but the lamps blazed brightly, and Elinor rubbed her eyes hard when she saw a man clothed in the vestments of a priest standing in the middle of the room. She instantly recollected the story she had heard. Yet she felt not the least fear. She sat on quiet and motionless.

The figure raised its right hand and pointed to the oaken ceiling of the room. This action was thrice repeated, and Elinor noted the position of the beam pointed at. Whether the apparition spoke or she imagined that it did, she never could say, but she raised herself from the chair and heard herself say.

"Yes, yes, we will look—we will look to-morrow."

A sound at the outer door distracted her attention, and when she looked at the spot where the figure had stood, nothing met her sight. Another knock sent her to the door where Mary Boyle, in anything but the best of temper, stood.

"The ways of the trains in this misfortunate country is hard to understand. Some royal bodies, bad luck to them, were travelling on a special train that broke down, and there our train stood for hours. I thought you'd be in bed, Miss Elinor. I had to take a car from the station, and the man charged me five shillings. And I'm starved."

"Oh, dear! I'm forgetting," Elinor laid fresh logs on the fire. "I fell asleep, Mary."

"Dead tired you must be. Well, a drop of tea will revive us. There's nothing like a sup of tea when one is cold."

On the next day Elinor told her story to Michael, who at first laughed. "You must be mediumistic, Elinor."

But Elinor insisted on the removal of the beam she pointed out, and when Michael had clambered up on the tables and chairs, placing one on top of the other, he inserted his hand into the opening. His various gropings had at first no result, but finally his fingers touched a small tin box. With the assistance of a lighted candle he secured the box and descended to the floor.

"Open it," Elinor said shortly.

"There is a small book only in it—a book like a note-book." Michael studied a page and gave an exclamation.

"The writing is barely legible, but a Father Longfield has entered the names of three persons for whom he is to offer up a Mass each. The names mentioned are John Ware, Margaret Ware, and—the writing is dim—a Father Wood."

"Ah!" Elinor cried. "I knew there was something. We must have the Masses said immediately."

The Masses were duly said by the priest of the parish, and when Christmas came round Hilda Remy was a guest at Roodcross. So, too, was Mr. Oldham, the lawyer, to whom the story of the priest's appearance had been told. When dinner was over, the lawyer pledged his host and hostess.

"I'm a lonely old man, but I shall look forward to being entertained here for a few Christmastides," Mr. Oldham said as he sat down by Elinor's side. Michael and Hilda Remy moved away.

"You will have another hostess though, Mr. Oldham," Elinor said. "Don't you think that Michael and Hilda will make a likely pair? They are not young, but Hilda loves Michael. She has a small fortune too, which will be useful in renovating Roodcross."

"But you, Miss Elinor!" the old man ejaculated. Elinor touched his wrinkled hand.

"I am going to be a nun. I think I always wanted to be, but since that night when I saw the priest I knew I had to serve God in this way."

Mr. Oldham coughed and wiped his eyes.

"God bless you!"

ASTRAL PHENOMENA.

By REV. LEONARD MACCABE, C.P.

FOLKLORE is the lyric of national life, the apocalypse of the soul of a nation. The towering phantasies of imagination scintillate with the glitter of fairy creations, loom fearsome with the black magic of the underworld. Away in the nursery days of nations, imagination was the creative genius, the dynamic force that ruled them. Unspoilt by scientific epidemics and physic morbidities they built up another world of immaterial beings who could at will be seen, and who made this world their haunting ground. Materialism blew to atoms the fairyland of nations. Rationalism forsook reason when it flung into the flames of its madness the folklore of the world. The more subtly developed a nation's spiritual sense has been, the more etherealised has been its conception of life. If the slavery of sensualism was the state of the people, its folklore is a tattered, foul-marked fragment of its history. To the mass of the people, folklore was national history, the treasury of tradition. Into the stories of real men and women was weaved the rich texture of fable. It was the revelry of darksome nights to some itinerant story-teller. An indefinable, supernatural sense indulged in the vagaries of fancy. The "airy nothings" of fancy took bodily shape. They crammed the darkness. They could do all that mortal could—and more. They flung their spells on people with eerie exactitude. They set going the colossal machinery of the unseen world to exalt or ruin man. And yet, caprice is absent. No fairy tale is unmoral. Some truth is vividly, picturesquely taught. Whatever fantastic creations the human race in its fairyland has made, virtue is eternally triumphant, whilst vice lies in abysmal ruin.

One may with a degree of certitude find the genesis of folklore in the primitive tradition of the human race of a depopulated paradise, and an exalted and ruined celestial host. In almost every national folklore we find the scriptural allegory of the battle between the armies of Michael and Lucifer in a multiplicity of disguises. People have been obsessed by the supernatural. The *personae dramatis* of folklore, fairies, pixies, giants, ogres, etc., are really the human embodiments of the good and fallen angels. The topsy-turvydom of madness can characterise any scientific diagnosis of humanity's visualisation of the supernatural. One must allow the widest scope to the wildest thing in the world —the imagination. People did not believe that these good and bad spirits were shut up in a world walled by infinitude. They roamed the world: the bad spirits on expeditions of destruction

and death; the good, on expeditions of joy and life. However loath one be to rip up delightful delusions—countless still cling to fairytales—one may divide folklore stories into two main classes: every being of the genus of fairy is a good spirit—an angel; every being of the genus of ogre is a bad spirit—a devil.

In the economy of creation, in the grades of being, the superior has power over the inferior; vegetative has power over inanimate; irrational over vegetative; rational over irrational. The spirit world has power over the material world. An angel can shape matter into a human likeness. But it cannot make it human: growth and nutrition, the essentials of life are absent. By superior intelligence and intuitive knowledge an angel can conjecture human thoughts, and from experience conjecture how circumstances will affect the mind. The experience of ages, the world-long contact with every phase of rational, human life, gives an angel an amazing insight into human life. Sacred Scripture has recorded definite appearances of angels in human form which men have mistaken for their fellows. By their own native power they could have assumed the likeness of the human body. A fallen angel, no less than a good angel, has this power.

Modern psychic research has been trying to tear away the veil between the seen and unseen worlds. It has rent it, and seen visions—not of a fire-flooded hell or ecstasy swept heaven. Nothing so gauche, so primitive! Cloudy, vaporous shapes have come from the "vasty deep" with the dullest stories, often ludicrous and farcial, of the life beyond the grave. There is a great boom of spiritistic stunts in England to-day. A successful medium can command substantial fees, and win a popularity as wide as a cinema star. The supernatural, rejected by the nation at-large, has left an abyss which nothing can fill. Spadefuls of spiritistic rubbish are being flung in to fill it up: but,—"that way madness lies." Out of evil may come good. This diabolist cult—furiously repudiated by Spiritists—has convinced many of the reality of consciousness after death—albeit, a histrionic immortality. There is a colossal fraud. The gullibility and curiosity of people is most delicately cultivated and spectacularly satisfied. But, unquestionably there is actual communication with the spirit world. Catholic teaching emphatically holds it as diabolic. The inanities, vapourings, scurrilities, profanities of the seance rule out the intervention of good spirits. A fallen spirit can fake the likeness of a person deceased: can hit off his or her eccentricities, mannerisms and voice intonations: can conjecture incidents in his or her life on earth.

A new field has been opened up by the "discovery" of the "aura" and "ectoplasm." We are solemnly told by psychicists that "ectoplasm" is latent in every human being. Why not? This ectoplasmis a sort of condensed astral fluid, a cloudy substance that is

exuded from the human being: the "aura" is a kind of halo of the same substance, like the rings around the moon. Man has a limited dominion over matter. An artificial sponge looks and acts the same as a natural sponge. We are informed we ought to find a trinity in man: body, soul, ectoplasm. All the phenomena of Spiritism are reduced to the shirling from eternity to time of the departed's ectoplasm. The immortal body which Sacred Scripture maintains will be the property of each after the last day, is the ectoplasm. It has all the properties of a glorified body. What a thrilling hypothesis, what a daring speculation! I have seen some photographs of this ectoplasm. In my innocence I thought some crude photographer had badly bungled!

There have been many cases of quasi bi-location. I do not touch the bi-locations recorded in hagiology. In a death agony, in a staggering mental upheaval, in a terrific moral crisis, people have actually seen others as present though hundreds of miles away. Might not this ectoplasm theory—if admitted—offer a solution? The veriest tyro in philosophy will remember the axiom: if a phenomenon is capable of explanation by natural causes, never drag in the supernatural. Might not the astral fluid (if it exist at all) in one, be magnetised by another, and suddenly shoot up an ectoplasm into one's consciousness? I write of astral phenomena of people actually living. I was discussing this point a few days ago with a Catholic Scientist. He told me of a case that came under his own observation. A mother in a city in England had a son in the British Army. One day, sitting in her house, she heard the mad rush of water and saw her son disappear in the whirling eddies of the Indian Ocean. Some days after, the War Office reported him drowned in the Indian Ocean. Another case was told me by a priest. Although in a town in England, he (apparently) walked into a room and stood by the writing desk of a friend of his in a hotel in a big continental city. He had no knowledge of this phenomenon: he was thinking of his friend at the time he apparently walked into the room. About a week after he received news of this amazing phenomenon. Why flourish exultantly supernatural explanations, or, bury one's dead in the sand of mystery? Then, there is a common phenomenon called telepathy. Two people in a room, after a silence, will suddenly speak of the same thing: or, people at a distance will know, in rare cases, the needs, wishes, circumstances of the other. One explanation given is: one brain sets in motion the ether waves which carry the message to the other brain. It is a fascinating study, unravelling the tangled skein of astral phenomena. Scientists put these phenomena down to the sixth sense, technically called "allergen." It may be a preternatural quality like second sight, sometimes in Celtic people, and so common amongst the Hindoos.

Perhaps there is some quality, dormant in most, highly developed in a few that pierces the tattered phenomena of consciousness, gets fleeting glimpses of things which shun the light of day in a realm whose confines are guarded by immaterial creations.

The most common species of astral phenomena is the ghost. As children, how we were held in fearful fascination by the ghost story! The long winter nights meant a revelry in the ghost world. Christmastide drew all the ghosts from their hiding places to haunt the scenes of byegone days. The ghost is an immemorial, a democratic institution, the heirloom of forgotten generations. But, is there really such a thing as a ghost? A lecturer I heard the other day emphatically denied it: his audience plainly showed its disapproval. The reason he alleged was: the insufficiency and doubtfulness of the data. I don't know whether all the ghosts in the world terrorised him that night for his outrage on them! It would be rashness to fling into the limbo of groundless superstitions the universal belief in the reality of ghosts. Yet, half of the ghost stories one hears are sheer nonsense. A very small percentage may be taken seriously. It is putting too big a strain on human credulity to believe in ghosts romping around empty houses: doing a sisyphean stunt on a staircase; giving nocturnal selections like a jazz band; practising the fistic art on peaceful sleepers. Destructive phenomena may be safely attributed to evil spirits; places and houses can be diabolically possessed. But, the respectable, good-mannered, lone ghost—is it a figment of the imagination or a reality? The imagination is a first class liar, an adept at hallucination. When everything is normal, one is forced to admit the reality of ghosts. A ghost is a disembodied soul. The soul goes into a spirit state after death. To be invisible it must assume matter shaped into the likeness of the human being whose individuality it retains. Where is this matter? It must be existent. A stone wall is non-existent to a ghost. Could it be possible that this speculative, hypothetic ectoplasm is this matter? In the case where the ghost is a figment of the imagination how is it visible to the senses? The ectoplasm in oneself? To prove the reality of His Risen Body Christ showed the qualities of life—for example, He ate with His Disciples. A ghost never eats. From a photograph I have seen of a ghost there is an uncanny similarity to the phenomena of the seance. All the photographs, of course, may have been faked. I rely solely on the trustworthiness of the photographer whom I know to be a man of honour. A mind may transmit phantasms, mental pictures, to another mind. Is it beyond the region of possibility that it materialises these phantasms? The hypothetic ectoplasm which everyone has (if admitted) may be the matter utilised by the mind;

CONTRIBUTORS TO "THE CROSS."

MAGDALEN ROCK.

M. BARRY O'DELANY.

LOUISE M. STACPOOLE KENNY.

LILIAN M. NALLY.

[Photo by LAFAYETTE, Dublin].

MARGARET MCGARVEY.

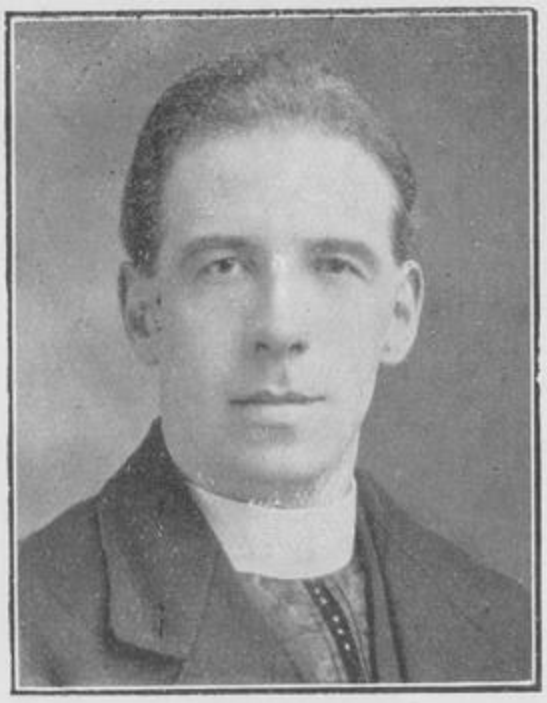
ANNIE M. P. SMITHSON.

[Photo by Keogh Bros., Dublin]

E. F. KELLY.

CLERICAL CONTRIBUTORS TO "THE CROSS."

REV. LEONARD MACCABE, C.P.



REV. MICHAEL PALMER, C.P.

REV. H. E. G. ROPE, M.A.

REV. PIUS O'CAROLAN, C.P.

REV. WILFRID BRODIE, C.P.
[Photo by College Studios, Dublin].

REV. PLACID STEVENS, C.P.

so that a ghost is an automaton of ectoplastic matter adrift from the mind.

One is set thinking by the mysterious, psychic developments and discoveries of modern times. For the most part they are pitiful subterfuges and substitutions of Revealed Religion. We are on the eve of yet greater discoveries. Science is truculent in its attitude to the supernatural: it is the first consoling sign of capitulation. It has led humanity into a chaos haunted by weird cries and terrifying apparitions in abysmal darkness. It will yet lead humanity back into the glory of Revealed Religion, into the belief of the Communion of Saints. The writer has only a man-in-the-street's knowledge of psychic problems; he does not pose as an expert; he utterly repudiates any idea of stating the Catholic psychicist's position. He seeks, rather than gives information on these tortuous, fascinating questions. But, he believes that the denouement of the study of astral phenomena will startle humanity like a catastrophe; it will hasten the Millenium.

A CHRISTMAS STAR STORY.

By M. BARRY O'DELANY.

LITTLE Gilbert Darcy said that when, like flowers of the shade, the bright stars dimmed and faded in the dawn, he heard them singing still. Is not the sweetness of the violet felt even after it has been dead for ages and ages? He was thinking of the quaintly-carved cabinet with its funny little drawers and doll's-house doors, where his grandmother kept a package of time-yellowed letters, tied with discoloured silk; and it seemed to him that if he could smell the perfume of flowers so long dead there was no reason why he could not hear the stars still singing, even in their sleep. He heard them more distinctly in the night when they once more showed their shining faces; that was all.

Whenever Gilbert talked like that, grandmamma would shake her snow-white head and tell him that he must not have such fancies, but play more with other children and dream less by day.

"But—but, granny dear, the stars are very fond of music, and they are really able to sing. It is all written down in your poetry book and you read it to me so often that I know it by heart. Don't you remember, granny, the part where it tells how the stars sang together for joy on that first of all the mornings, long ago?"

This question completely nonplussed poor Mrs. Darcy. Having no answer ready, she knitted faster than ever for

some moments, the click-click of her long steel needles alone breaking the silence.

"The poem about the moon's birthday, you know," the boy went on. "See how well I remember it——

"When heaven's joybells rang
On that first morn,
And the stars together sang
When thou wert born,
Some few in singing fell
To 'raptured wave,
And to the heave and swell
Their music gave.

And though sad waves now well
With tears of earth,
Still ever in their swell,
Since thy glad birth,
Sounds the celestial note,
From Heaven far,
That did down earthward float
When fell a star!"

"I remember every word of it!" and Gilbert clapped his small hands triumphantly.

But granny's thoughts went back to fifty golden years ago. Then the giver of the book on whose fly-leaf he had written his poem of the stars, and whose long-faded letters were in the violet-scented cabinet downstairs, was a gay young bridegroom and she a fair-haired bride. Now the ivy grew over her poet-love's tomb, and she—ah, well, the day was near when she should see him once again and they should part no more!

"Well, granny, what have you to say now? The stars did sing together—now didn't they?"

"Oh, but that was thousands and thousands of years ago, dear," Mrs. Darcy answered briskly; thinking her little grandson too young for a theological explanation of the subject, and yet not wishing to encourage his dreaminess. "That was thousands and thousands of years ago," she repeated emphatically, as she stroked his golden curls. "The poor old stars have lost their voices since then, you may be sure," and there was a curious twinkle in the kind eyes gleaming through the glasses resting on the high-bridged nose, once on a time. "It was all very well, no doubt, in their lusty youth; but a cracked bell has more music in it now than they have——"

"No, no, granny; the stars sing still. I think the angels must have sung like that on Christmas night!"

Twilight was closing in, and the lamps had not been lighted yet; which was, perhaps, why the old woman covered her dim eyes with her hands and gave up counting the stitches. As darkness deepened over the snow-roofed houses star after star twinkled through the uncurtained window.

"They are trembling with joy because Christmas is so near," laughed the boy, "and the brighter they grow the sweeter they will sing."

"Trembling with joy! Not a bit of it," said Mrs. Darcy stoutly as she lifted Gilbert to her knee and laid a loving

hand upon his golden curls. "They trembling with the palsy of age, like your poor old grandmother."

He shook his head.

"They are singing the very song they sang on that first of all the mornings; no other song could be so happy."

"Tut! tut! singing—now! not they; but laughing, as they wink so slyly at the countless failings of mankind. Or it may be that they are blinking to keep back the tears that fill their poor old eyes when they see how sin and sorrow have blackened the fair world they once rejoiced in."

"Oh!" drawing a deep breath. "Now I understand why the rain falls; it is when the stars shed tears. But they are not weeping now. Listen!" and he placed a finger on granny's shrivelled lips.

"They are singing quite loudly now."

"How old does granny look?" she asked abruptly, taking the little thin hands between her withered ones and forcing a smile.

"How old—do—you look! Why, you look over a hundred," her grandson answered promptly, and with the unblushing candour of his years.

"Ahem!"—pretending to be offended —"you are no flatterer, young gentleman. Well, well, whatever my age, I did think my singing days were over, anyway. But since the stars sing, in spite of their thousands of years, why should not a mere baby who looks as if she had only turned her first century? So here goes!"

Thereupon the good lady raised her voice and gave vent to a series of such wheezy, wind-broken, goose-like cackles and ear-splitting screeches, that little Gilbert burst into a ringing laugh; which was just what granny wanted. Indeed, smiles and tears were never very far apart with this child of the angel-face and poet-soul. Then the old lady laughed too, though the laughter was at her own expense; for it was one of the peculiarities of this little boy's laugh that it made those who heard it want to laugh too; even as when he spoke so quaintly of the stars and of the angels, they felt inclined to cry without quite knowing why.

When the green-shaded lamp was lit and the crimson curtains drawn, Granny and Gilbert had their tea and, after that, a game of Blind-Man's-Buff, or Hide-and-Seek; and it would be difficult to say whether it was the child or the white-haired woman who enjoyed the play the most.

When Gilbert had said his prayers and was in bed in his room, he asked that the blinds should not be lowered.

"The stars do sing!" he said to himself as he lay among the pillows and gazed wistfully at the glittering sky. "I suppose 'tis because Granny is so deaf that she can't hear them—poor old thing!"

Something of pity always mingled with Gilbert Darcy's respect for his

elders. So far as reading, writing, grammar, geography and—above all!—Greek or Latin went, their opinion was not to be questioned, of course. But—when it came to out-of-school matters, such as fairies and flowers, bees and butterflies, horses and dogs, and cats and birds, or—as in the present instance—the singing of the stars, he had a soothing certainty that small boys were better judges than their elders. Nor was he so far wrong, after all. Now, as in the ages past, the heavens are telling the glory of God, and the song of the stars is as harmonious as on that first morning of a young and sinless world; but only the child-like of heart can hear it.

"He needs but wings to be an angel!" Mrs. Darcy whispered as she looked at his face in the moonlight. He stirred in his sleep, and, bending down, she caught the words:—

"Star!—Oh, dear Star of Bethlehem! Have I killed you?"

Next day she asked him what he meant.

"The biggest and brightest of all the stars; the one that comes nearer and nearer every night, because Christmas is coming nearer and nearer, is the one I call the Star of Bethlehem," he announced. Last night I had a fearful fright, Granny; I dreamt that I had shot the Star of Bethlehem, and that as it fell mortally wounded at my feet, I began to cry. 'Do not cry' said the star; 'for I am so old that I am glad to die.' I often ask the Star of Bethlehem to come down to me. But I suppose I must wait its turn to fall, and that no star can fall till the seed for a new one has been sown. If all the stars fell together God's garden would be empty; it would be like plucking all the flowers of the earth at the same time. However, I begged Santa Claus to put the Star of Bethlehem into my stocking on Christmas Eve, and, if he does, I'll give all my other toys to the poor children and play only with the star."

As Christmas came on apace, with whistling winds and blinding snow, it grew more and more clearly evident that little Gilbert Darcy would soon have no need of toys. On Christmas Eve he was worse than usual, and none knew better than the poor old lady who wept by his bedside that the end was at hand. Just on the stroke of midnight, when the bells were pealing, and the waits were singing "Glory to God in the Highest," the boy opened his eyes for the last time.

"Oh, Granny! Granny!" he exclaimed in ecstacy, clapping his hands, "it is coming down at last! The Star of Bethlehem is coming—open the window wide!"

She obeyed.

"Give all my toys to the poor children for Christmas, Granny—It is coming!—my star is coming!—It is filling the whole room with light!—O—O—Oh! Granny"

And to the strains of the celestial music that only his child ears could hear, his white soul floated away into the world of stars.

People coming home from midnight

Mass gathered in wondering groups to gaze at a star that was bigger and brighter than all the stars in the sky.

"It is the Star of Bethlehem!" said a voice beneath the open window of the room where the dead boy lay.

The words fell clear as a bell upon the still, frosty air. Some in jest, and others more in earnest than they, perhaps, gave themselves credit for being, took up the cry:—"The Star of Bethlehem! The Star of Bethlehem!"

Long after the voices had died away, the words still echoed in the sorrowing soul of the aged watcher by the bed of death.

"The Star of Bethlehem! The Star of Bethlehem! That was what my darling himself called it."

The memory brought her hope and comfort now; for with it came sweet thoughts of the Child in whose honour the Star of Bethlehem first shone, Who loved to have the children near Him upon earth, and Whose Kingdom none could enter who had not the trusting faith and innocent love of children. Gilbert was having his Christmas Day in Heaven! It was a blessed certainty that made her happy even in her loneliness; happy with a happiness too little known on earth; although the stars sing of it always.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: THE "WAY OF LIFE."

By REV. AUGUSTINE MONK.

PRICELESS and countless alike are God's gifts to man—gifts of nature, gifts of grace. Even from the very dawn of creation, when He called this world of ours from nothing and flung it into being, even from then has He been drawing unspeakable favours from the treasure-house of His boundless generosity to heap them upon the head of an undeserving and even ungrateful humanity. Now of all these God-given gifts that man enjoys, his liberty is undoubtedly one of the greatest. The Creator has endowed His creatures with this faculty of choice that they may use it for His glory and their own profit; that they may select the things that are best and noblest, and put aside those that are worthless and wrong. Man's use or abuse of his liberty is the measure by which his merit or demerit shall be gauged. Good and evil, right and wrong, are ever before us, each vying with the other for first place in the human will. God is good, His law right, all else evil and wrong. A choice must be made. On one side we have God and glory, on the other mammon and misery—which

shall be ours ? Let it be God first and God always. " Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life ! " (John vi, 69.)

* * *

Truth is one : that is, singular, indivisible, and without an equal in the same respect. We often find in this world that there are several ways—all of them useful and lawful—of approaching one and the same end. In many things there is option, but in truth there is none. Two things which are contradictory cannot be true, for one excludes the other ; in a word, one is true and the other false. Right, like truth, is one. They are in fact identical : what is true is right, and what is false is wrong. Now, there is a time-worn question which deals with truth and falsehood, right and wrong. Though settled long ago, its discussion is still in the mouths of men, as if further dispute would call forth a new answer, and it is to the task of once more debating it that we now betake ourselves. It is this : Is one religion as good as another ? and if not, which is the true and right one ? This is the problem which may well be styled " ancient yet ever new " ; the problem which has worried many a mind, converting some and apostatising others ; the problem which to some has proved a riddle left unsolved, to others a secret once penetrated ever after guarded ; to some a subject of the deepest interest, to others a matter of cold indifference ; but to all, did they only realise it, it is the question upon whose answer hangs an unending destiny of weal or woe—" Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death . . . You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free " (Jer. xxi, 8 ; John viii, 32).

Now to the first part of the question, namely—Is one religion as good as another ?—the answer must be : No. Religion, since it means nothing else than our dealings with God, is of its very nature a matter of truth and right, and hence one.

Truth, as we have seen, is one and indivisible ; but religion is that group or sum of truths and duties by which our lives are directed towards God, and therefore our journey heavenwards lies along one path, and one alone. Many and varied, indeed, are the religions in the world to-day, all of them differing in their doctrines ; but they cannot all be right, for if they were, there would be no such thing as truth, since their teachings are in open contradiction, one to the other, and Christ Himself has said : " There shall be one fold and one shepherd " (John x. 16). If this be so, which religion, then, is the true and right one ? And this brings us to the second part of our question.

Now there are certain conditions which must be fulfilled in the religion which claims to be true—conditions that will make its truth undeniable and its doctrines flawless. It must be a real society, having a hierarchy and an

infallible teaching authority; it must be visible, enduring, complete and independent of every other society. We shall now see that the Catholic Religion fulfils all these conditions; in other words, we shall see that the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ. It is a real society inasmuch as its members tend towards a common end, employ the same means in so doing, and obey the same supreme authority. It has its hierarchy inasmuch as it is ruled by a body of bishops, subject to the Roman Pontiff, whom all Catholics obey. It has a teaching authority which enjoys a God-given infallibility never known to err. It is visible inasmuch as it has external means of uniting its children—visible Sacraments which confer grace, and a visible ruling power through which it exercises its authority. It is endurable inasmuch as it has flourished and functioned uninterruptedly even from the age of the Apostles, regardless of the dark and threatening clouds of heresy and persecution which so often overhung it; and to-day it still perseveres and even increases in spite of the efforts of its enemies (as they themselves admit). It is complete and independent inasmuch as it has, under God, all the needs of its spiritual life and vigour within itself: requiring nothing from the powers of this earth, and resisting all interference from those who have tried and still try to bend it under their yoke. Yes, such is the Catholic Church, the Bride of Christ—strong, beautiful and invincible. All down through the ages has she nourished and taught and guided and guarded her children as would a dutiful queen-mother, and the world has witnessed her glories and her triumphs even from the beginning—"Thy renown went forth among the nations for thy beauty: for thou wast perfect through My beauty, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God" (Ex. xvi, 14).

We have seen that the Catholic Church fulfils all the conditions needed to constitute a true and right religion. But—one may ask—does no other religion enjoy this prerogative? No; not even one! Take up any other religion and examine its creeds and practices. What do you find? An illogical, inconsistent entanglement of errors; a number of human souls beating about in the darkness of misbelief, seeking the light that never shines upon them, and caught in the meshes of the net that heresy has woven around their misguided destinies; a body without a soul; members without a head. Where is their infallibility, or who is there to ward off error if each one, even the rude and uneducated, may probe the inscrutable depths of God's Word, and draw from it a meaning to suit himself? The Church of Christ is one, holy, universal and apostolic: but what of the others? They are not one in belief nor worship nor government, and there can be no religion without union. They cannot be holy, strictly speaking, inasmuch as they lack the supernatural helps provided by the Catholic Church, such as the Holy Mass,

the Sacraments, and the abiding presence of Christ Himself. They are not universal inasmuch as they exist but here and there and in almost every place in a different way, but the Catholic religion is to be found in every part of the world, and even still it is spreading its roots and extending its kingdom. Furthermore, can any one non-Catholic sect compare with it in numbers? They are not apostolic, for which of them can trace its origin back to the time of the Apostles? Whereas the pastors of the Catholic Church have succeeded those whom Christ Himself appointed even to the present day, and the Popes have sat in the chair of infallible authority without a break even from the days when St. Peter sat there too and shepherded his neophyte flock. These and many other arguments all go to show the truth and authenticity and excellence of the Catholic Church. Yet how many are there still outside the fold, wandering in the barren wilderness of heresy and unbelief with no shepherd to guide their straying feet—"Other sheep I have" said the Good Shepherd, Christ, "that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." (John x. 16.)

It is said, and with truth, that "outside the Church there is no salvation"; but it is an assertion which may need a word of explanation, for "this saying is hard; and who can hear it?" (John vi, 61). Does it mean, as many think, that no non-Catholic can be saved, and that all those souls that differ from us in belief can never enter heaven? No: taken literally and unconditionally, it would be too harsh a doctrine. Let us see, therefore, what its real meaning is. First of all there are in the Church a body and a soul. The body is the *visible* element or the number of those who form a visible society, whose members are united under the rule and guidance of the bishops and the Roman Pontiff; the soul is the *invisible* element or the number of those who form an invisible spiritual society, whose members are united by the internal bond of faith and charity, that is, they who are in the state of grace. Now, there is no salvation for him who *culpably* remains outside the *body* of the Church. In other words, he who knows that the Catholic Church is the one true Church of Christ and still refuses to enter it, cannot be saved; for he deliberately violates and contemns the divine command uttered by Christ Himself in those threatening words: "He that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi, 16). As for those who are in doubt regarding a choice of religion they are bound to diligently seek out the truth, and having found it, to embrace it. God will always lead them into the light, if they but pray to Him Who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." (John xiv, 16).

We saw in the beginning that of the many gifts with which God has enriched man, there are few greater than human

SAINTLY PASSIONISTS

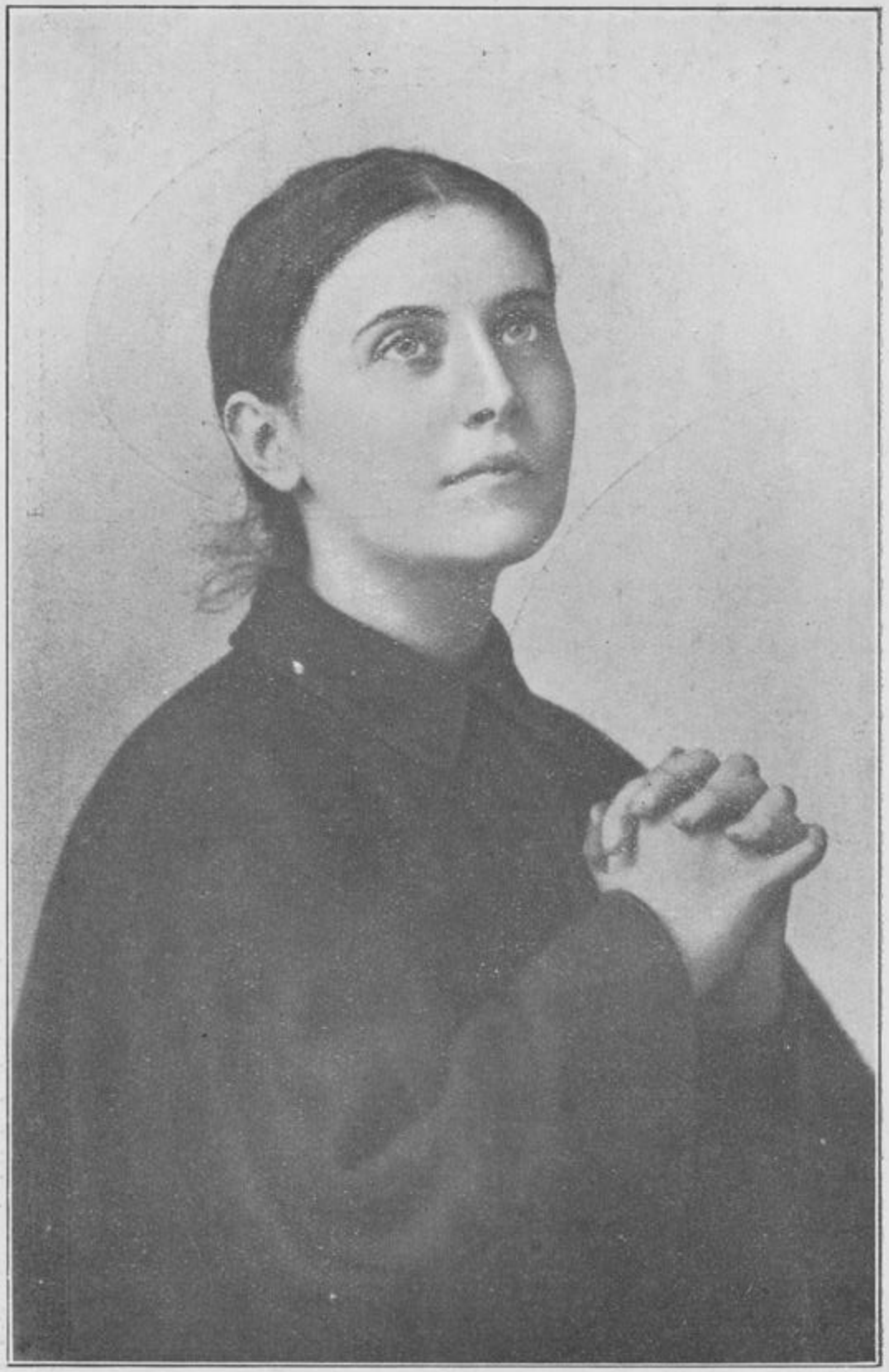
FR. PAUL MARY PAKENHAM.
First Rector of Mount Argus.

VEN. FR. DOMINIC BARBERI.
Founder of the Passionists England.

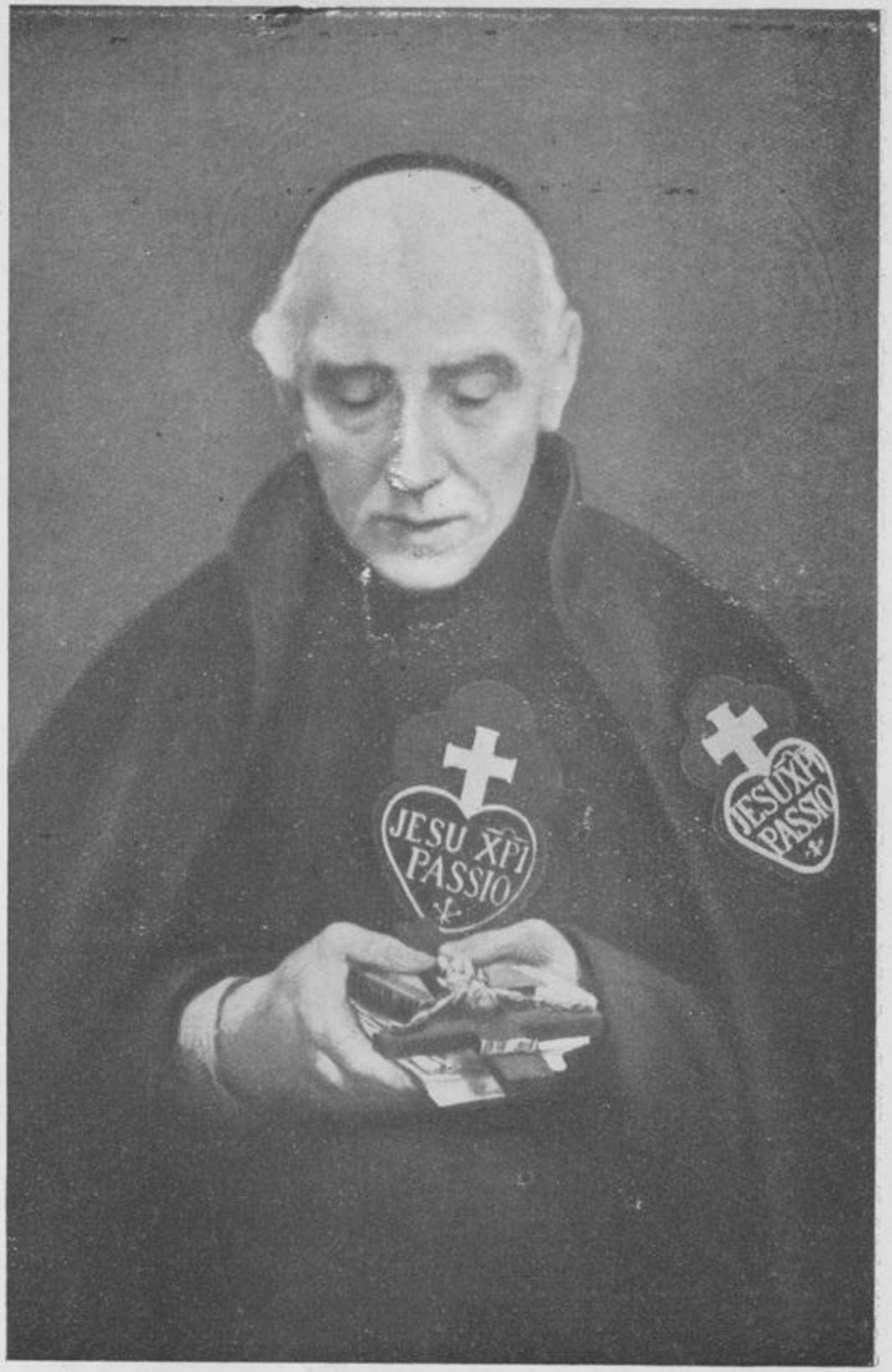
VEN. VINCENT STRAMBI
Passionist Bishop.

FR. CHARLES (HOUBAN) OF MOUNT ARGUS.
(A hitherto unpublished photograph.)

FR. IGNATIUS SPENCER.
Apostle of England's Conversion.



GEMMA GALGANI
(*Born* 1878—*Died* 1903).



FATHER CHARLES
(*Born* 1821—*Died* 1893).

liberty. But however great a boon may be our freedom, the misuse of it can bring us to a woeful end. In the matter of religion, we are not, in a sense, free; for if we were, all religions would then be of equal avail in attaining eternal happiness. We know, however, that there is but one true Church, outside of which there is no salvation. But is not this bondage rather than freedom, coercion rather than liberty? Yes, but it is the bondage of freedom, by which we are locked in the fetters of the friendship of Christ—fetters which loosen us from the chains of sin—"He that is called in the Lord, being a bondsman, is the freeman of the Lord. Likewise he that is called, being free, is the bondsman of Christ" (I Cor. vii, 22). Strictly speaking, we are, even in the matter of religion, free; for if we are perverse enough and blind enough, we may still refuse to share fellowship with the children of the Catholic Church. But, if knowing the truth we abide not by it, we shall weave the web of our own woe, and God's punishment upon us will be justly severe, for He shall say: "Behold My servants shall eat, and you shall be hungry: behold My servants shall drink, and you shall be thirsty: behold My servants shall rejoice, and you shall be confounded: behold My servants shall praise for joyfulness of heart, and you shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for grief of spirit." (Is. LXV., 13-14). Yes, our destiny is in our own hands—an eternity of bliss or of misery.

The Catholic Church is as a vast temple in which all who wish to see God for ever in glory must assemble; we may enter it or we may remain outside.

The Catholic Church may be called, too, the "Way of Life"—the defile through which we must all pass if we wish to gain that land "flowing with milk and honey" to which it leads—"Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death" (Jer. xxi, 8). We have a choice to make and free wills to make it—"As free, and not making liberty a cloak for malice, but as the servants of God." (I. Peter ii, 16). On the one hand we have the Catholic Church, the Church of Christ, and on the other a confusing myriad of soulless creeds: on the one hand, truth and right and order, and on the other, error and wrong and chaos: in a word, on the one hand we have Christ and His glory, and on the other the devil and his shame. Shall we, then, "pawn our souls for the devil's dismal stock of returns"? No; we will go to Christ, knowing that it is He—and He alone—Who has "the words of eternal life." We will ever cling to His faith, and in our own way we will champion His Church; we will be the meek and faithful lambs of His fold and hearken dutifully to the voice of His shepherd. And how will He repay us? He will no longer call us His servants but His friends, and what more can we desire than the friendship of Christ, by which, if faithful, we receive not only His grace on earth, but also His glory in heaven?

THE SPECTRE'S SECRET.

By ELEANOR F. KELLY.

Author of "Our Lady Intercedes," "The Three Requests," "Blind Maureen," etc., etc.

I.

THE train steamed into Delford and the next minute the platform of the quiet little station was filled with a bustling, merry crowd, for it was nearing Christmas and the glad spirit of the season was making itself felt in every heart. Most of the passengers who had alighted from the train were going home for the holiday and were laden with parcels which one might readily guess were intended for contributions to the coming festivities, while nearly all were heartily greeted and taken possession of by friends who had come to the station to meet them. One among them, however, a sweet-looking, though rather shabbily-dressed girl of eighteen stood by herself on the platform gazing about her as if expecting to see someone that she knew, but without result, for when, in a little time, the crowd had dispersed, she was still solitary. Presently, however, a porter came along bearing a small, battered portmanteau which was labelled "Miss Mary Vernon, Passenger to Delford," and placing it at her feet said:

"I think this is yours, Miss. Is there anyone coming to meet you? I haven't seen anyone from Pinetree House here this evening." "Thank you for seeing to my luggage," she said giving him one of the few coins in her small purse; "I did rather expect to see someone as it is rather late, but I fear Mrs. Dingle has forgotten me." "It's a shame the way she treats you," he replied. "It's not what you were used to and if Mr. Vernon hadn't died suddenly without having time to make a will it's not she that would be mistress in the place to-day, but your own self, I'll be bound."

"I suppose I'll have to walk home. I don't mind the distance, but I do mind its being so late. It will be quite dark long before I get there."

"You'll be all right, Miss. There's plenty of people who got out of the train here goin' along that road, so you won't be lonely. And I'll send on your box in the morning by some wagon that's goin' your way."

He did not suggest her staying in Delford for the night or hiring a vehicle to take her home, for he surmised, and correctly, that the price might overtax her purse. She thanked him for seeing to her portmanteau and then set out bravely on her two miles' walk. The shades of night were falling fast as she started, and when she reached the entrance gate to the avenue leading to Pinetree House it was quite dark. But presently a glorious moon rose above the dark tree-tops and flooded her path with light the whole length of the way. And somehow, the dispersal of the dark shadows seemed to her an augury that

the heavy clouds which now darkened her own life would soon be lifted also, and she felt cheered and even exhilirated, so much so, indeed, that her face literally beamed and struck with wonder the housekeeper, Mrs. Dease, who received her on her arrival.

"Welcome, Miss Mary," said the housekeeper. "But you do look happy. One would think you had come into a fortune instead of being done out of one. It's too bad that you had to walk from the station, but your aunt said nothing about sending to meet you and you know I daren't give orders. She and the girls are gone to spend Christmas with some friends in Sussex, where there's to be a grand coming-of-age party. They're only gone a few hours ago. I'm afraid you'll find it a bit lonely, but I'll do my best to make you comfortable." "You always do, dear Mrs. Dease," said the girl, giving her a warm embrace, "and as for Mrs. Dingle being away, in fact I am rather pleased than otherwise, for she has made it quite plain to me that she strongly resents my presence in the house. Only a few days ago I had a letter from her to say that I must not expect to be kept at school any longer and that I must now look out for some position which would enable me to earn my own living."

"Too bad, Miss Mary, especially when it is well known that Mr. Vernon intended to make you his heiress. I myself heard him say so, not once but many times."

"Ah, well, nothing happens without either the will or the permission of God, and so I must be resigned to my lot. But I cannot conceive how I am to set about supporting myself. I've never been trained to anything. I suppose this is the last Christmas I shall ever spend here."

"Then we must make it as happy as possible, and not go to meet trouble. Perhaps something good might turn up. But come along and have some refreshment. You must be in need of it now after your journey from London."

Saying which, she took the girl to her own sitting-room where she soon placed an appetising meal before her.

Miss Mary Vernon was known to all Delford and its environs, and to the county generally, as the adopted daughter of Cecil Vernon of Pinetree House, a wealthy landed proprietor. And it was generally understood, and on very good foundation, that of his own expressed word, heard by the circle of his intimate friends, and repeated by them to all and sundry, that she was to be his heiress. While she was yet little more than a child he had, so the tale ran, taken her from an orphanage, given her his name, and brought her to Pinetree House to be in all things to him as his own offspring. And as he was past the meridian of life and a professed woman-hater as far as matrimony was concerned, few doubted that she would inherit his wealth, for he seemed ardently attached to her.

Some people insinuated that they could trace a resemblance in her features to

those of the owner of Pinetree House himself, but then malicious tongues will wag on practically no foundation. Whatever might be said of her other features, her eyes and hair were perfect contrasts to his, for while his hair was auburn hers was blue black, and his eyes were dark while hers were the sweetest gray. It was hinted that she had Irish blood because of her colouring, but her foster-father gave neither confirmation nor denial to the rumour.

After her advent to Pinetree House she lived in the lap of luxury and nothing was left undone which might contribute to her happiness. Mrs. Dease, the housekeeper, at once took her to her heart, her governess was both kind-hearted and capable, and she had all the servants at her feet, while her every slightest wish was gratified. This went on for many years, yet she remained unspoilt, for she had a nature which no amount of indulgence could injure. Warm-hearted and kind to all, the whole household idolized her and her popularity extended to the whole countryside and even to the neighbouring town of Delford, where she frequently appeared in company with either her father or her governess.

But alas! those halcyon days had a sudden ending. One fine morning Cecil Vernon left for a race meeting in his usual health apparently, but before night had fallen he was brought home dead. Heart failure, the doctors said, though there had never been even a suspicion that there was anything amiss with that vital organ. Then his sister came, his nearest surviving relative, from whom he had been estranged since the time of her marriage of which he did not approve, and the whole house was ransacked by her in search of a will. None was found to her unconcealed delight, and she immediately took possession of all her brother's property, his adopted daughter having, of course, no legal claim.

Mrs. Dingle was at that time a widow with several daughters, plain and unprepossessing, and seeming even more so in contrast with Mary Vernon's sweetness and loveliness. A sad change now came for poor Mary, for instead of being queen of the household as heretofore, she was treated now like its pariah, and had it not been for the surreptitious kindness of Mrs. Dease, the housekeeper, her life would have been almost intolerable. All the old servants had been sent away except Mrs. Dease who had shown herself too valuable to be done without, and the new ones were soon made to see that Mary Vernon was a person of no account and were encouraged to treat her with indifference and even contempt. The housekeeper loved the girl for her own sake and could not be prejudiced against her, but even she dared not openly show her regard for her, though she managed in various ways to do her many kindnesses without the knowledge of her mistress or her four lynx-eyed daughters.

Mrs. Dingle's dislike of poor Mary

would have urged her to turn her adrift at once, but she had a great regard for appearances and for what the county would say, so instead of turning her out of doors as she would have wished, she sent her to a cheap convent school in London. But she had been there for little more than a year when Mrs. Dingle determined to wash her hands of her altogether, and so had written to her just before the Christmas holidays that she must now do for herself, and that once Christmas was over, her presence at Pinetree House would be no longer tolerated.

It was a sad predicament in which the poor girl found herself at the joyous season, for she was ignorant of the world and had no conception of any way by which she might earn her own living, while at the same time she had no money and no friends except good-hearted Mrs. Dease.

II.

Mrs. Dease talked pleasantly all the time the girl was having her supper so as to distract her thoughts from her forlorn position, but when the meal was finished and Mary had expressed a desire to retire because of the fatigue caused by her journey, the housekeeper's good-natured face clouded somewhat. After a few moments' hesitation she said :—

"I am very sorry that you cannot have your own room, Miss Mary. The mistress gave it to one of her own girls and she gave orders that you are to be put up in the attic. I remonstrated with her as much as I could about it, but it was no use. I daren't put you in any of their rooms—one of the maids who acts as a sort of spy for Mrs. Dingle would be sure to tell—and all the others are occupied except the haunted room, and of course there could be no question of putting you there."

"The haunted room!" exclaimed Mary. "Why, I didn't even know that there was a haunted room. There surely wasn't one in my time or I should have heard of it."

"It's since the master died, Miss Mary —they say he walks. But I forgot you've been away all the time and wouldn't, of course, have heard of it. It's the room in which he was laid out after he was brought home dead from the race-meeting. One of the maids who had a bad attack of neuralgia was going down to the kitchen for something to ease it—it was in the dead of night—and she saw the door of that room open and a tall white figure come out of it, although we all knew that it was empty. She got such a fright that she fainted, and when she came to she found herself lying on the floor and the candle she was carrying blown out. She could only see the dim outline of the figure in the flickering light, but everybody agreed that it must have been the master's ghost."

"Then God rest his soul if it was, indeed, he," said Mary. "I shall pray with all my heart for his happy eternal repose for he was very good to me, and the moment I have money of my own I shall have Mass said for him."

"Why, you talk like a Catholic, Miss Mary. That's the very way that Norah Desmond, an Irish girl that I once knew, used to talk about her dead friends."

"Why, I am a Catholic, Mrs. Dease. I found the Nuns at the convent where I was, so sweet, that I thought it must be a very good religion which makes women like that. And so I asked them all about it and they gave me books to read and told me everything I wanted to know, with the result that I became a Catholic, and very happy I am to be one."

"Well, to think of that now, Miss Mary!" said Mrs. Dease, who, though decidedly Low Church, was too good-natured to be a bigot. "You'd better say nothing to Mrs. Dingle about it, for it will set her more against you than ever. She has so much regard for appearances and she won't think it respectable."

"I don't mind in the least if she knows. In fact I shouldn't mind if it were proclaimed from the housetops, it has made me feel so happy. And as for the respectability so dear to Mrs. Dingle's soul, I have a suspicion that Hell is full of 'respectable' people."

"You do say funny things, Miss Mary."

"Funny, but perhaps true," answered the girl. "And the strange part of it all was that when the Nuns were explaining Catholicism to me it seemed like something which I knew already, but had forgotten. Even the prayers, especially the 'Hail Mary,' seemed familiar, but I forgot that, of course, you know nothing about the 'Hail Mary.'"

"Oh, but I do though," said Mrs. Dease. "Norah Desmond, the Irish girl that I told you of, explained it all to me. And I will say that there is one point in which I am inclined to believe that Catholics are right—that His Mother has influence with Jesus, her Son. An ordinary mother has and why not she. I know my son, Jim, dear boy, would go all lengths to do anything I ask him to do for me."

Mary would have gone on talking, for the subject was dear to her heart, and she had already conceived a warm devotion to Our Blessed Lady, but she could not conceal her fatigue, and the housekeeper noticing her tired look said:—

"But I mustn't keep you talking any longer. I see you are in need of rest, and so will take you to your new room."

The attic which poor Mary was now to occupy had been made as comfortable as Mrs. Dease could possibly make it. Indeed, she had removed thereto some articles of furniture from her own room so as to make it more habitable, but still it was an attic and looked dreary. The girl was too weary to notice its appearance particularly, but no sooner had the housekeeper entered it than she gave an exclamation of dismay, for a slate had been blown away from the roof, leaving an aperture through which the wind whistled and which at any moment might give entrance to rain.

"My dear, I cannot let you stay here. You would catch your death of cold.

See, a slate has been blown away since the room was done up," said the housekeeper.

"But I don't know on earth where to put you," she continued wrinkling her brows in perplexity. "I dare not put you into Mrs. Dingle's or the girls' rooms, and the only other one vacant is the haunted room."

"But I shouldn't mind in the least sleeping in a haunted room. I'm not afraid of ghosts."

"But this one is really haunted. There is no doubt about the spectre. Those that have seen it are trustworthy. You don't believe in ghosts?"

"Yes, I do, but I'm not afraid of them. If they're from God then all is well, but if they are the machinations of the Evil One then I know a way to frighten them away." And she thought of the little bottle of holy water which she now had with her always, and of her Rosary made of berries which grew in the Garden of Olives and which had been blessed at Lourdes.

Mrs. Dease's deft fingers quickly got the haunted room ready for occupation and Mary was duly installed therein.

"Go to sleep now, Miss Mary, and don't be worrying about things. Worrying does no good and only makes one less able to perform one's duties. And remember that wise saying: 'the darkest hour is that before the dawn,'" said she as she was preparing to leave the room.

"I'll try not to worry, dear Mrs. Dease," said the girl pressing her hand, "but still I cannot forget that after Christmas I shall be homeless and without either money or friends. Mrs. Dingle has made it quite clear that this roof will no longer shelter me, once Christmas is over. But I'm going to do something which I feel confident will show me a way out of my difficulties. I'm going to make a Novena to Our Blessed Lady to help me. She was homeless herself about this time and I know my unfortunate position will appeal to her."

"But I forget that of course you don't know what a Novena is," she continued seeing the housekeeper's perplexed look. "It's just this—you say special prayers for what you want for nine consecutive days, and if God sees that what you pray for is really for your good He answers often in the most wonderful way."

"Well! well! everyone and their own beliefs," said Mrs. Dease, and wishing the girl a good night's rest she left the room.

Mary was tired out, but she did not forget to start her Novena, which she did with much fervour. Then, almost as soon as she had laid her head on the pillow, oblivious of the morrow's cares, she fell into a sleep so deep and tranquil that she did not hear a carriage drive up to the door to be immediately followed by a tumult of noise and confusion downstairs.

Mrs. Dingle and her daughters had returned quite unexpectedly. A case of

infectious disease had suddenly broken out in the house for which they had set out with such pleasurable anticipations of a good time, and being much scared they beat a hasty retreat and retraced their journey.

III.

It was nearing that darkest hour which immediately precedes the dawn of day when Mary was awakened by some sound which she concluded she had heard in a dream. But when she opened her eyes she was amazed to see that the room which had been in utter darkness when she went to sleep was now flooded with light. She looked around and could scarcely repress a cry of fear and dismay when she saw a tall, white figure in the room. Was it indeed the ghost of which she had heard? But, no! This was no shadowy form but a substantial human figure arrayed in flowing white draperies, and there seemed to be something strangely familiar to her about the head and shoulders. As she watched with fascinated eyes she saw the figure approach a picture which, in curious fashion, was nailed flat to the wall. And as she watched she saw thin, claw-like fingers unfasten the nails and take down the picture. A small recess in the shape of a hole roughly made appeared behind it, and from this the claw-like fingers extracted something which seemed to be now subjected to careful scrutiny. Then the object, whatever it was, was carefully replaced, after which the picture which concealed it was again screwed into position. The figure now turned to take up a hand-lamp which had been set standing on a table near, and in its light the face was revealed. It was that of Mrs. Dingle! The next moment, with noiseless footsteps, she had vanished.

"Surely I must have dreamt it all," said the girl to herself as she lay in the darkness. "Yes, that's what it was—'a dream within a dream,' of which I have so often heard, in which people dream that they are really awake. It must be so, for Mrs. Dingle is almost a hundred miles away."

And soon she was again in slumber for she had not yet slept off her fatigue; but with the earliest morning light she awoke and the scene of the night before recurred to her with startling vividness. She looked around the room and saw the picture fastened to the wall just as she remembered it. Somehow it seemed to attract her irresistibly. She got up, went towards it, and tried to pull out the nails just as she had seen the long fingers do by twisting them round and round. In a few minutes the picture was unfastened and there, in the place which it covered, was the identical hole she had seen the night before. She peered into it and saw a small roll of white paper. On unfolding it she read with strange sensations the record of a marriage between Cecil Vernon of Pinetree House and Mary MacMorrogh of a certain place in the County of Wicklow, Ireland. In her first bewilderment she did not grasp the full significance of the record and of what it might mean to her, but gradually

SOME PHOTOS OF OUR PROMOTERS.

MOUNT ARGUS PROMOTERS

GROUP I.

[Photo by Mr. J. McDonnell]

MISS M. A. O'BOYLE

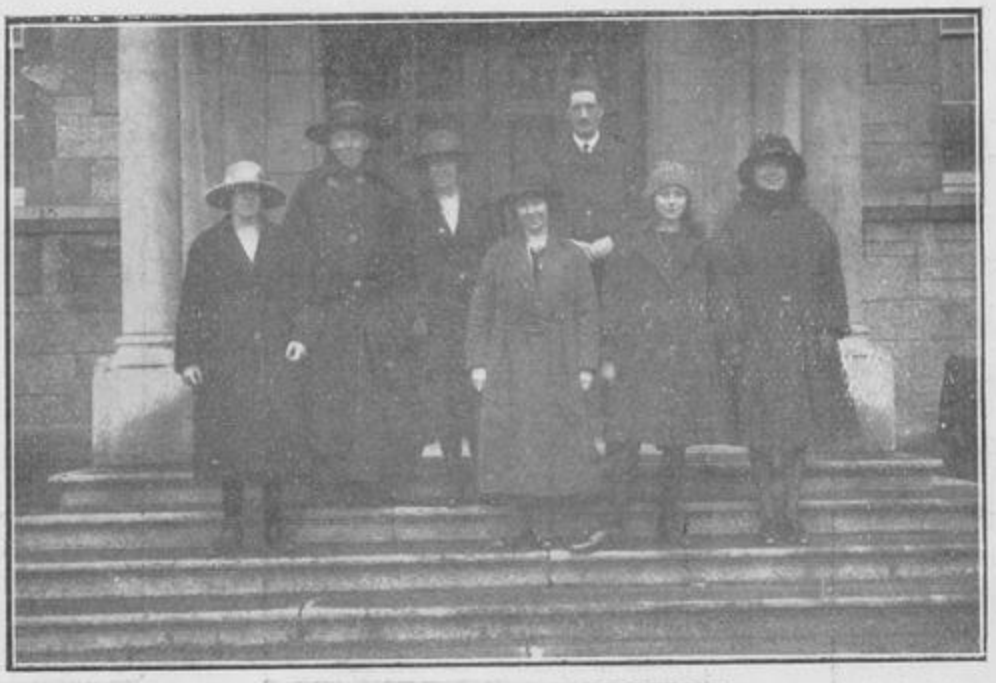
Belfast

MISS N. HYLAND

Glasgow.

MISS M. CANNON

Belfast.



MOUNT ARGUS PROMOTERS

GROUP II.

Photo by Mr. J. McDonnell

SOME BRADFORD PRIZEWINNERS.

C. LAUDE.

C. M. GEOGHEGAN.

M. MALONE.

St Joseph's College. Bradford.
Directed by Sisters of Most Holy Cross & Passion.

M. HANNEY.

F. HAIGH.

J. K. MASLEN.

it was borne in upon her. She retained the paper and carefully replaced the picture.

No sooner was it fastened than there was a knock at the door and Mrs. Dease entered.

"I'm glad you are awake, Miss Mary, for Mrs. Dingle came back quite unexpectedly last night and I don't want her to know that I put you here. She won't allow anyone into this room. I believe she'd keep it locked but that it might seem peculiar. I've done up the hole in the attic so that it will be all right to sleep in now."

"How kind of you, Mrs. Dease," said Mary. "I'll be out of here with all possible despatch."

"And if you wish, come to my room when you're dressed. There's a fire there."

Mary thanked her and wondered if she might tell her of her discovery, but she thought it better not to do so for the present. The fact that Mrs. Dingle had returned threw a flood of light on the mystery and solved the question of the spectre which was believed to haunt the room. As Mary dressed she reflected on the matter and came to the conclusion that the document which was now in her possession had been hidden behind the picture, with sinister design, by Mrs. Dingle herself and that some strong impulse urged her in her sleep from time to time to see if it were still safe in its hiding-place. A bad conscience had made her a somnambulist. If there was a child of the marriage which Cecil Vernon had kept so private, or if his wife were still living, then Mrs. Dingle was not the rightful owner of her brother's property and that would account for her concealment of the document.

With the aid of some money which good-hearted Mrs. Dease had given her as a Christmas present, Mary hurried up to London to consult the Nuns with whom she had been, about the matter, for she had learned to feel that she could rely on them to befriend her in any trouble or perplexity. They advised her to place the document in the hands of a solicitor in Lincoln's Inn Fields who did business for them occasionally and was eminently trustworthy. Mary did so, and when he heard all the circumstances and the strange way in which the record had come into her hands, he expressed the conviction that something good would come of it to the girl herself.

Mr. Longton's reputation for getting through his cases expeditiously stood unrivalled, and without delay he set out for Ireland to pursue the necessary inquiries, while Mary returned to Pine-tree House, hoping that Mrs. Dingle would not have discovered the loss of the hidden paper.

Whatever had happened, her attitude towards the girl was more hostile than ever, and she gave her a peremptory order to be out of the house before the last day of the year. The only course she could think of taking was to go back to her friends the Nuns in London and ask

them to help her to find a position. But before she was quite ready to depart, Mrs. Dingle, who seemed more than ever impatient of her presence in the house, locked her out of her little attic bedroom and was in the act of seeing her small, shabby portmanteau put out of doors when a strange gentleman drove up to the house. But he was not strange to Mary who was going down the steps, and though her eyes were tear-stained, she gave him a smile of recognition.

"You seem in trouble child," said he· "Where are you going?"

When Mary had explained her position, he said, glancing at Mrs. Dingle who was standing by with a bewildered air :—

"But no one can turn you out of your own house, my child. You are the legitimate daughter and sole heiress of the late Cecil Vernon, Esq., and any other claimant to his house and property is an impostor. I have with me here documents to prove it, and can produce witnesses if necessary to corroborate my statement."

Mrs. Dingle's collapse was utter and complete, and she was wise enough to see that putting up a fight would only involve her in grave trouble and heavy expense, so that Mary was allowed to enter into immediate possession of her rightful inheritance. It appeared that Mrs. Dingle found the record of the secret marriage when the house was being searched for a will, and by some unaccountable prompting had not destroyed but merely concealed it.

The story which Mr. Longton unravelled was that Cecil Vernon, when a young man on a visit to some friends in Ireland, had met and married, though privately, a beautiful peasant girl named Mary MacMorrogh, who died in giving birth to Mary. Her parents refused to give up the child to him as he was a Protestant, but they died a few years later and then Mary was sent to a convent orphanage to which her father traced her and from which he brought her with him to Pinetree House as his adopted daughter.

"I didn't tell you about the discovery of the paper at first as you were in Mrs. Dingle's service, and I didn't want to put you in the position of being disloyal to her, by helping me against her," said Mary to Mrs. Dease as that worthy soul was congratulating her on her good fortune. "But isn't it wonderful that it was on the first day of my Novena to Our Blessed Lady that I found it and that it was on the ninth that I came into my inheritance?"

Mrs. Dease agreed that it was very wonderful indeed and began to study Catholic belief which, a little later she said, was not in the least like what she had been told about it. Eventually she became a Catholic and a devout client of Our Blessed Lady.

The Beatification of Ven. Fr. Dominic Barberi, C.P.

What has been done, and how we can help.

By REV. URBAN YOUNG, C.P.

FEW objects can be more interesting to the many readers of "THE CROSS" than that which stands at the head of this article. For it was Father Dominic who founded the Passionist Congregation in these countries, and to him, then, under God, we owe what we are and what we have as children of St. Paul of the Cross; and this, too, whether we wear the dark robe of the Passion as members of the Congregation itself or whether we are of that numerous company who count it as a priceless spiritual possession that they are enrolled in the Confraternity of Christ's Cross and Passion.

The present writer is often asked: "When is Father Dominic going to be beatified?" And he is as often tempted to answer enigmatically: "Wait and see." Rome is, proverbially, eternal, and like God from Whom she comes, her mills grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small. In nothing is Rome so meticulously careful as in the case of those of her children who are proposed as being worthy of the veneration of her children on her Altars. When, then, we hear of a coming Beatification by Christ's Vicar of a child of Holy Church, we may rest assured that he is worthy of the honour and of our veneration. After the fiery ordeal of Rome's examination we may well say "Palmam qui meruit, ferat."

Especially as regards miracles the Catholic Church is most careful in her attitude, as we can see by the rules laid down by Benedict XIV. in his work on "The Canonization of Saints." Over and over again, evidence that critics have considered convincing has, as a matter of fact, been rejected by the Congregation of Rites at Rome.

Father Dominic died in 1849, and, apparently, remembrance of him died too in a short time, if we except a small company of devout souls who always treasured his holy memory as one of their most valued spiritual possessions.

By degrees interest was reawakened and it was felt that such a life should not be allowed to "waste its sweetness" but should be proposed, in no uncertain voice, as an object for the veneration of the Faithful. As a result, Father Dominic's Cause was formally "introduced" in 1889 and the so-called "Informative Processes" were gone through and his writings examined. Processes—or the minute examination of witnesses brought forward by the Postulator—were held in Rome, Lucca,

Viterbo, and the other dioceses of Italy where Dominic had lived and worked. Later, investigations were extended to Paris, Tournay and, in these countries, depositions of witnesses were taken in Belfast and Liverpool.

On the 14th June, 1911, Pius X. gave him the title of Venerable, and in 1912 the Apostolic Processes—or those initiated by the Holy See, and not any diocesan authority, began in the various dioceses in which he had lived. Throughout 1912-1913, these Processes were held in England with Birmingham as centre, and many witnesses of first-class importance were heard. Interrupted by the World War, the work was afterwards resumed and, to be precise, we are now at the exact stage known as the "Continuative Apostolic Process."

The great thing now is—the finding of additional witnesses. Here again we are often asked—what is a witness? People are under the false impression that they are not and cannot be witnesses in such a "Cause" unless they have something extraordinary to tell, or unless they know a great deal about the Servant of God, etc. This is a great mistake. A witness is—either one who knew personally the Servant of God, or. failing that, one who has at least spoken with someone who *did* know him, These are the two principal classes of witnesses, and these are their essential qualifications.

When we think of the number of places visited by Father Dominic and in which he gave Missions and Retreats, there must be several, if not even many, witnesses of the second class as explained above. All such should communicate with the writer without delay. By so doing, they will confer a great favour on the Passionist Congregation, and bring upon themselves the blessing of God, and enlist the powerful intercession before the throne of the Most High of him whom "the King delighted to honour."

The "Forward Movement" is in the air these times, and what better leader can we have than Dominic Barberi of the Mother of God who, for over fifty years, agonized, prayed and laboured for the return to the Fold of the myriad souls in these countries deprived of their Catholic heritage?

HOMELESS.

No room for Mary in the Inns,
For Mary and her Child,
And they must wander east and west
All through the winter wild.
Nought but the misty stars above
To guide them on their way;
No room for Jesus in the town
No place His Head to lay.

"No room, no room," the thoughtless cried;
For Mary and her Son;
Nought but a stable old and bare
For God's own little one.

The ox and ass to keep Him warm
With gentle, bated breath,
The little King that came on earth
To save the world from death.

"No room, no room," for Him they said,
With frozen hearts of sin.
Their minds were dark, they knew no grace
To let the great light in.
Now when on Christmas morn He comes
Down from His Heaven above,
Let us find room within our hearts
To welcome Him with love.

LILIAN M. NALLY.

THE LINK THAT BINDS.

By KITTY FITZGERALD.

JOE McCABE ran up the long flight of steps, his childish face the colour of a rose, pulsing all over with the delicious eagerness and tireless energy of childhood's precious years.

"Ben," he cried. "Ben . . Ben . . "

There was no answer. "Ben," he called yet again, there was a barely concealed impatience in his voice.

The housekeeper came from her little room at the further end of the hall. "Ben can't come to you, alanna," she said in her motherly way. "Ben has met with an accident and he will never answer mortal call again."

The boy started. "Why?" he asked slowly, why can't he answer?" Then as the terrible truth dawned on his baby brain, the bright colour left his cheeks, there was even a tinge of awe in his voice as he asked softly: "Is he dead?"

The good soul put a kind arm about his tiny shoulders.

"Yes, alanna, he is, God rest his spirit."

"Where is he now?" he asked dully.

"In his own room, Master Joe," she replied, "both the priest and doctor have been with him, but he was past all help when they arrived. Better not see him, for he was terribly injured."

Joe looked her full in the face. "That makes no difference whatever," he said abruptly, and slipping from the shelter of her arms, went quickly upstairs to the man's room.

As he entered, a strange awe took possession of him. The room was full of sunlight. It had two large windows, one commanding a choice view of the magnificent demesne, and the other looking down on the terrace with its gleaming marble statuary, climbing roses and vivid masses of pink and scarlet geraniums. There was a branch of lighting candles at each side of the snowy bed, and a great bowl of white lilies on the polished oak table. The housemaid was arranging the latter when he entered, but after a single glance at his awed little face she walked away.

He walked up to the bedside, and touched the marble cheeks, shivering as he did so. "Ben," he whispered sadly, "Poor Ben, did you suffer much?" Then without waiting for an answer he continued: "I'm terribly sorry for ever being bold or not learning my lessons, or giving you any trouble at all, I will be real good from this out, Ben . . " his voice trailed off, for the first time he noticed the big blue bruise on one side of Ben's neck, he pulled back the sheet, but let it drop quickly again. So his "man Ben" was all cut and bruised and hurt, was gone away for ever . . the child shivered in spite of himself, and next moment, as if ashamed of his seeming cowardice, he climbed up on the white bed and putting both arms about the blue neck kissed the cold lips passionately. "Don't be lonely Ben," he whispered eagerly, "if the others are afraid to come to you because you're cold and dead, I'm not, I'll stay with you and keep you warm."

He ran his baby hand through the light soft curling hair, and kissed the still lips again as though expecting some response.

An hour later, when the housekeeper came into the room, Joe was asleep, his arms still around the dead man's neck, his rosy cheek pressed against the snowy coverlet. A single sunbeam shone like a divine arc across the bed, and crossing herself devoutly, the old woman took the sleeping child in her arms and went away.

* * *

Joe McCabe was the only child of Squire McCabe of Coolhown, one of the tiny western villages that snuggle in a fold between the hills of Ireland. A man, deeply versed in old Eastern traditions and languages, the Squire spent most of his time exploring in Egypt. And as his wife invariably accompanied him on his expeditions, their only child was left to the tender care of the Squire's sister, and an elderly housekeeper. When he reached his tenth year, the former appointed a young man of deep learning, Ben McHugh, as tutor and companion to little Joe. Besides being a clever man, Ben McHugh was the happy possessor of all those qualities that invariably endear adult to child. From the first day of his appearance at "The Oaks" Ben and Joe became fast friends, and after two years of companionship they were almost inseparable.

Then this evening Ben had been cycling to the village for some papers. To shorten the journey he took a side boreen. When just at the narrowest place he met a threshing engine. Ben was going down-hill at a rapid pace, there were no brakes on his bicycle. Some said the engine-driver was drunk; however, be that as it may, nobody could say with any certainty how the accident happened, but in less than ten minutes Ben McHugh had passed Beyond.

Joe McCabe was twelve years of age at the time,

and this was the first big shock in his smooth little life. Far on into the night he turned the problem over and over in his mind. He had often been wilful and bold with Ben; what would be the best way for showing how sorry he was? Then into the child's mind there flitted the memory of a thing Ben had said more than once.

"When you're dead and gone nobody will think of you laddie," he had said, "anyhow, when I'm gone there will be nobody to cry or pray, for I've not got a single relation or friend."

Nobody to pray for him. The little lad jumped out of bed, and burying his face in his hands commenced to pray for Ben. Next morning he got the gardener to put a Black Wooden Cross at the spot where the accident had taken place, and all through his boyhood years he never once passed the place without saying, on his knees under the tall beech-tree, "Dear Lord, have mercy on poor Ben"

The first link in the CHAIN THAT CANNOT BE BROKEN.

CHAPTER II.

The years ran away. You know how rapidly time flees. Yesterday Joe McCabe was twelve years, to-day he is twenty-two. Ireland was passing theough the "Reign of Terror" and Joe McCabe (baby Joe the boys called him on account of his fair hair and pinkish, childish complexion) had done a lion's share for the old land. His name was whispered with awe throughout the length and breadth of two countries, there was a big price on his head, so he had to lie low, for the "Specials" knew him right well and in those terrible days a disguise was not always a guarantee of a safe passage.

It was his mother's birthday and he had risked all for the joy of wishing her in person "the happiest of all happy days and ever so many joyous returns." They were seated on the terrace, the three of them, father ,mother and son. It had been a perfect day, but all things perfect have an end and twilight was already swiftly stealing the light from the sky. It would not be safe to remain under the parental roof even for a single night; he had enemies in many parts and there were always the traitors. So Joe waited until the young night shadows spread their protecting wings to shield him in his flight.

As the time drew nigh for his departure, the mother's face visibly whitened. Where would she see him again? . . What if the answer in the Book of Life was NEVER? . . Noticing her pallor, and guessing the reason thereof, the young Captain rose to his feet. "Now adieux, my dears," he said heartily, making his voice as careless as possible, "by all accounts this warfare canot last another month and then I will be back to you both for good and aye." He laughed with sheer delight at the thought. There was silence for a few moments, a deep, sacred silence that invariably affixes itself to a parting of ways. It is at such seasons that the heart finds its tongue and speaks in a language that is precious beyond price. A large pear fell with a soft thud on the soft sward, a batch of prettily-tinted leaves blew down,zig-zag fashion, from a tall fuschia, a thrush commenced a late vesper hymn in the oak tree overhead.

After a single passionate embrace Joe McCabe walked away, between the wide spreading trees. The parting was hard, he reflected, and the future so terribly uncertain. Somehow to-night he was strangely downhearted, he might have been grim and fanciful, but surely the night air was full of silent whisperings. Twice the rustling of an early autumn leaf caused him to start in fright. The tall firs seemed to mock him as he passed, standing upright in the darkening night like grim sentinels, bold and defiant as heartless conquerors demanding a sacrifice.

He dare not take the open roads, he was well known and were there not always spies in the camp? So, crossing a style, he walked along in the friendly shelter of the high hedge. The night was young still, so far the moon had not arisen. He had four long miles to go before he reached the shelter of the "camp" where the boys were lying in wait for his return. After journeying steadily for a mile, he suddenly bethought of the narrow boreen that ran right across the country, and which had been such a favourite walk of his in the long-ago. It would shorten his journey by almost half a mile, and when one's life was in the balance every yard counted. It was such a lonely spot and so unfrequented at all times that he deemed it as safe, if not wiser than the fields; so, cautiously peering through a gap in the thick hedge he listened attentively. No, there was not sight or sound of any living thing. He hurried down to the gate at the end of the field, crossed it, and entering the boreen he walked swiftly, silently away. The thick clouds that had covered the face of the moon were beginning to thin, he must get as much of the journey over as possible before the young moon shone forth in all her silver brilliance. His thoughts began to wander, he yearned with a terrible longing for the quiet home life he had left behind, but the stern, persistent call of ROSEEN DUBH had sounded in his ears, luring him on, ever farther away. When would strife be over, he wondered—when would his loved ROSEEN be free?

HALT! . . The cry rang out sharp in the night air as a pistol shot. He stood still and looked around. Merciful Heavens—there were six of

them—the dreaded "Specials" pouring over the opposite hedge, armed to the teeth, their evil faces grim with satisfaction. They recognised him and he recognised them, every single one of them. He knew what to expect at their hands, so heedless of the terrible risk he was running he did a desperate thing—HE RAN AWAY. The bullets grazed his ears as he ran, he heard their wild curses as they jumped over the ditch in pursuit. The bullets still flew about him, he could hear them steadily gaining ground, he would have no earthly chance against the six of them—still . . On he ran, and they in pursuit, gained inch by inch, then foot by foot, in less than another minute they would turn the bend of the boreen and be upon him.

His foot caught in something and he fell heavily to the ground; with difficulty he raised himself to his feet and turned to face them as a fox- driven to bay, courageously turns to face the pack of hounds, when lo!—his heart leaped with incredulity, the six of them raced past him looking to the left and right, on all sides but where he stood.

"Where the H—— is he" they shouted, "curse him where is he, he disappeared just here." Up and down the lane they ran, blaming each other for his disappearance, they prodded the hedgerows with their bayonets, fired shots in all directions, and all the while Joe McCabe stood frigid and still in the clear moonlight, not daring to stir afraid of capture, too stunned with amazement at the turn things had taken. For twenty minutes they searched high and low in vain, and finally, baffled at the escape of their much-desired victim, they walked away grumbling at the loss.

When the echo of their footsteps had died away the strange trance-like feeling fell from Joe. Stiffly he moved his limbs, half dazed still by the miraculous escape that was his. He looked down at the ground, and there, half-hidden in the thick grass, was the plain Black Wooden Cross which in his boyhood days he had erected to mark the place of Ben McHugh's accident, and where he had spent many a minute in heartfelt prayer. Involuntarily the words came to his lips: "Dear Lord, have mercy on poor Ben."

As he whispered the prayer the Cross at his feet began to expand. Larger and larger it grew, and lo! as it increased in size, the black cross slowly turned to purest gold, glowing and sparkling in the moonlight like a living flame.

Half dazzled, he watched this phenomenon, and as he watched, there came to him a vision of Ben McHugh, the friend of his childhood days, the same Ben as of yore, but different in the sense that divides humanity from the Eternal. His blue eyes were lit with a very sunrise of joy, one smile he gave Joe, a single smile of eternal gratitude and love. Then the vision faded and all that remained of the glowing Cross was a little heap of splinters that were charred and burnt as the ashes of a fire.

The night wind rustled the leaves, a big owl flew hooting weirdly across the boreen. For the first time in his life Joe McCabe sensed the Magic Power of the "LINK THAT BINDS," for the first time he experienced the wonder of the Supernatural. Falling on his knees he kissed the ground where the Cross had stood, and, still in a half dream, he walked away out of the moonlight into the shadows.

Book Review.

"Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine," by MOST REV. M. SHEEHAN, D.D., Coadjutor Archbishop of Sydney. Publishers, M. & H. Gill & Son, O'Connell Street, Dublin. Cloth bound. Price 6s.

The trend of the age is to accept nothing for granted. Scepticism in natural science is a healthy sign of intellectual life and caution, because everything is in a state of flux. Old time theories, in the light of modern discoveries, are seen to be the irregular, diaphonous patchwork of speculation. The critical sceptic spirit has found its way into the world of revelation. The wild generalisations, subtle distinctive arguments, plausible hypotheses of the soi-disant savants in matters of scripture or religion have made the ordinary man in the street anxious to have a reason for the Faith that is in him. Attractive atheistic and agnostic primers are flooding the market; an intensive propaganda against Revelation is being waged—pamphlets, books are sold for next to nothing. So. it is with a feeling of deep relief and delight that we see Dr. Sheehan's book. The fundamental doctrines of the Christian Religion are treated with a lucidity, attractiveness and logic that we have not seen in many boosted apologetic works. The author's treatment of the Divinity of Christ and economy of the Catholic Church is admirably suited to the most fastidious intellectual as well as to the most untrained mind. The summary of each chapter arrests the attention at once; the divisions are concise and apposite. The teacher will find a nucleus of irrefutable arguments if he or she wish to elaborate the text; the pupil will find nothing obscure, overlapping, ponderous. We note with satisfaction that the old and new calumnies against the Catholic Church are answered with a wealth of historical data and incisive logic which make an indelible impression on the mind. A new departure—grouping the errors against a dogma or of the different ages, after the dogma has been explained will be welcomed by those who know how confusing it is to sift the truth from the error in our old-time apologetics. Every person anxious to know Catholic doctrine; every religious instructor; even every ecclesiastical student will be well advised to study Dr. Sheehan's book. We heartily congratulate the publishers on the great service they have rendered to Catholic Truth. The style, print and binding of the book could not be more attractive. We sincerely hope it has a record sale.

L.M.

In ainm an naoidheanáin naomhta.

"O! a Mhaimi, a Mhaimi, tá ré ar fad agam anoir, an dán áluinn do bíomar ag foghlaim ar fgoil i gcóir na Nodlag," arfa Domhnall Mac Craith, cúpla lá roimh Nodlag. "Nár mhaith leat é do clor?"

"Muire, ba mhaith, a Domhnaillín, a chroidhe, abair anoir dom é." "Abróchad, a Mhaimi," arfa Domhnall, "agus annrin nach neósraidh tú an fgeul do gheall tú dom mar gheall ar Iorasán?" "Neorad, a mhic," arfa Maimi. "Dhuell, reo duit anoir é."

"Sin é go léir, a Mhaimi, agus taithnighfeann ré liom go mór," arfa Domhnall. "Ni h-aon iongadh é rin, 'ré an dán ir deire do chuala mé le fada." Cad mar gheall ar an fgeul anoir, a Mhaimi?"

"Dhuell, fuirde coir na teine liom a leinb, agus béidh ré ar fad agat."

Tá'r agat go bfuil feana nór againn annro i nGirinn an dorar d'fágaint ar forgailt Oidhche Nodlag, coinneal do lasadh 'ra bfuinneóg agus cadaoir 'ra mbreir do cuir coir na teine. Deirtear go mbíonn an Muire Mathair agus Naomh Iósep ag gabáil timcheall an oidhche rin agus go dtagann an Muire Mathair irteach 'rna tighthibh uaigneanta; nó, ré fgéul é, go dtagann duine éigin a bíonn i gcruadh cár chun fuirde 'ran gcathaoir.

Dhuell, roimhe blíadhanta ó foin, bí bean 'na comhnuidhe in aice linn 'ran paróirte ro dár b'ainm, bean Uí Bhroin, agus do bíodh ionghnadh an domhan orthainn agus rinne óg cad na thaobh go mbíodh an bhrón agus an dólár chóm throm uirthi, ach d'innir mo mháthair an fgeul ar fad dom. Bí cúigear mac aici agus aon inghean amháin, agus bí Muirir, an buachaill ba fine 'na buachaill bheag láidir agus árd mear i gcomhnuidhe aige ar reana daoinibh. Thárla, nuair a bí reirean timcheall fiche bliadain d'aois gur chaitheadh amach fean bean agus a fear ar thaobh an bóthair lá fuar, fliuch 'ran geimhridh, toirc gan a beith ábalta an cior d'ioc.

Bí an tigearna talmhan féin i mbun na h-oibre, agus nuair do chonnaic ré an bean bocht ag iarraidh fanamhaint 'ran dtig 'na rabh ri le leath céad bliadain, do chaith ré féin amach í agus thuit rí i laige ar leac a' doruis. Do léim Muirir air ar an nóméid agus thug ré buille dó le maide throm do bí 'na lámh aige, agus ir beag nár mharbh ré é. Do chuireadh go príosún é go ceann seacht bliadhna annrin agus níor tugadh uráid ró mhaith dó, an buachaill bocht, agus cé go rabh a máthair agus a athair ana bhródhamhail ar, bíodar chroidhe bhirte ag fmaoineamh agus ag rior fmaoineamh air. Ni bíodh oiread ir litir féin uaidh ach go h-annamh, timcheall ceithre uaire 'ran mbliadhan. Nuair a bí ré cúig bliadhna imthighthe. Bí Nodlag ag teacht cúcha arís, agus chúr Nóra, Deirdhre do Dhean Ui Bhroin, iathaint uirthi Céitin Mór do cuir ar bun oidhche Nodlag le h-aghaidh na daoine ogha, agus an cathaoir 'ra mbreir d'fágaint coir na teine, féuchaint an dtuichfadh aoinne irteach cúcha in onóir de'n céad Nodlag. Dubhairt Aintí Nóra leo gur ceart do gach aoinne do bí ann, rul a ithidh pioc, dul 'dti an dorar, agus as rádh ór árd "Tar irteach annro ar an oidhche in onóir de'n Naoidheanán Naomhta," agus pé duine a tiochfadh, bíodh gur fláith nó bacach é, gur ceart fáilte ir fiche do cuir roimir agus gach rud do b'fearr 'rá dtig do thabairt dó le n-ithe. Chuaidh na daoine ógha 'dti an dorar ar dtúir, agus annrin bean Uí Bhroin féin; do rin rí amach a dá lámh agus ar rire "Tar irteach ar an oidhche in onóir de'n Naoidheanán Naomhta" agus annrin do thárla rud ionghantach; do thóg duine éigin a lámha agus chualadar gut ag rádh "Tiochfaidh, a mháthair a chroidhe ar an oidhche fada, fada, agus ní fágaidh mé go deo arís tú."

Nior fheud an bean bocht focal do rádh ach "A Muirir, a Muirir, buidheachar le Dia, buidheachar le Dia!"

B'é Muirir féin do bí ann, go cinnte, do tháinig ar air chuiche in ainm an Naoidheanán Naomhta.

MUIRIS NA MÓNA.

Go rabh gach beannacht de beannachtaibh na Nodlag orthaibh go leir

PRIZEWINNERS FROM ISLINGTON, LONDON.

WINNERS OF TROPHIES AT ISLINGTON GALA.

MARGARET FESTA.

JULIA BURKETT.

SEMI-FINAL NET-BALLERS FOR S. ISLINGTON.

ASSUNTA GRASSI.

EMILY CARROLL.

CLEMENTINE MARSH.

SOME OTHER PRIZEWINNERS.

DEIRDRE NI BROIN,
Rathgar, Dublin

NELL SHELLEY,
Harold's Cross, Dublin.
[Photo by KEOGH BROS., Dublin.]

LILLIE WHITE,
Ballybough, Dublin,

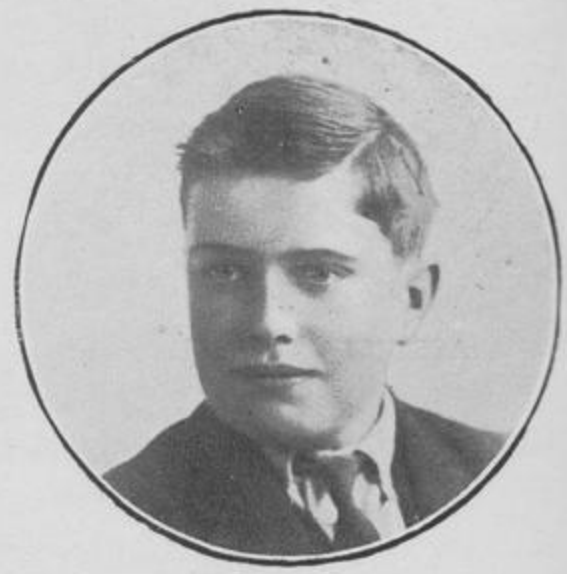
KATHLEEN BRENNAN,
Mount St. Joseph's, Bolton.

TERESA MILLER,
Mount St. Joseph's, Bolton

ANNIE HILTON,
Mount St. Joseph's, Bolton.

SEOSAIMH MAC SUIBHNE,
Kimmage, Dublin.
[Photo by KEOGH BROS., Dublin].

MARION WATTERS,
Kimmage, Dublin.
Photo by KEOGH BROS. Dublin .



SEAN O BROIN,
Harold's Cross, Dublin.
Photo by KEOGH BROS., Dublin]

Later: Fr. VIVIAN, C.P.

FOR OUR YOUNG READERS.

By "FRANCIS."

Christmas with its hallowed memories and glorious associations is here. It is the Nativity of Our Lord, the "feast of feasts," the season of joy and thanksgiving because Christ, the Friend of all, has come into our midst.

For the young it should be a season of great happiness. The caresses of Jesus were especially for the children of the world. "Suffer the little children to come to Me," He said, and they crowded round Him with love in their eyes, in their hearts and in their whole being. Thus it is with exceeding love within your hearts you should approach the Christ-Child in the Manger. A holy fragrance ever lingers round the Crib. God is near.

I ask of you, my little friends, when you kneel beside the little Infant King on Christmas morning, to plead with Him for our sorrow-stricken country and to ask of Him to lead her into the ways of peace. For myself I also ask a fervent little prayer. Remember, too, our dear and kind Editor who, out of the goodness of his heart, has given you so many precious thoughts during the year, and, now, so many pages of the beautiful "CROSS ANNUAL" for your very own.

May the Babe of Bethlehem bless each and every one of you, and may you all have a very joyous Christmas, and may the New Year bring to you the realisation of your dearest hopes.

THE GUILD OF ST. GABRIEL

IN "THE CROSS."

The Guild of St. Gabriel, for boys and girls, is an ever widening circle. It has increased wonderfully in membership, and has friends in many lands. From far and near, East and West, North and South, Many letters come to FRANCIS every month seeking admission to the joys of St. Gabriel's corner.

There are three handsome prizes offered each month and the lucky winners have the privilege of seeing their photographs in "THE CROSS ANNUAL."

Those of our readers who are not members and wish to join should write to FRANCIS, c/o THE CROSS, ST. PAUL'S RETREAT, MOUNT ARGUS, DUBLIN.

A HEART TO HEART TALK.

We have had a great year in the Guild. The number of young friends that I have made has delighted my heart. We are a happy, homely circle, and I hope our relations in the future will be as pleasant and intimate as they have been in the past. At a time like this, my mind naturally wanders back to other days and other friends. There are some who pledged me their eternal friendship, and now they seem to have deserted me. Where are they? Surely they have not all grown suddenly old! I feel sure that they scan the pages of the Guild with interest month by month, so I hope these words will stir them up and induce them to write to me for January. They cannot say that **I** was the one to forget first anyhow. Where, for instance, are **Rita Carlos** and her sister **Nina, Pattie Shelley** and **Noinin Brugha, Brian McDermott** and **Raymond Gallagher?** These are only a few names of old friends; but there are many others from all of whom a line would be more than welcome. See **Margaret Goudie** in far away America who ever remains a faithful friend. And as for the Athy cailini—**Eibhlin Ni Meadhra, Maire Ni Chathain** and all the rest of them—I have nothing but words of praise. There is only one thing I am sorry for, and that is that they don't compete often enough. They shouldn't let the prizes go away from them like that. They did great organising work for "THE CROSS" for which the Editor will be for

ever thankful. I am afraid the Southern Capital is not as active as it should be. **Thomas J. P. Daly** brought us some new recruits a few months ago, but we have not seen their names since. Now, Thomas, look into this matter and waken them up ! Is the West asleep too ? Our friends in the **Presentation Convent, Athenry,** whose essays were so promising, need to be aroused. **Katie Darcy** (though a Western) isn't asleep ! She is a great recruiter for the Guild and carried off a prize too.

My English friends are very active. Every month I get piles and piles of letters from Islington, Bolton and Bradford. The competition results for the past year reflect great credit on both their teachers and themselves. They are great girls. We hope to hear from them constantly during the coming year. **Eileen Glynn** is another old and faithful cross-channel friend, but we would like to see her competing oftener. Her letters are always welcome, but an essay would be more welcome still.

I am looking forward to hearing soon again from my Irish speaking friends from Listowel. I haven't heard from them for ages. In fact, to make a long story short, I shall be very disappointed if I don't hear from all my friends, both old and new, very soon.

It has often struck me that we have far too few **boys** in the Guild. I can't understand why the sisters don't make their brothers join our ranks. **Sean O'Broin** promised to write every month, but he must have left his promise in his pocket ! However, he is not too bad, and I am certain that we shall hear a good deal of himself and **Seosaimh Mac Suibhne** during the coming year. The latter is a new and earnest member whose essay on Hallow Eve carried off the prize. I'd better tell the girls to beware ; they won't have it all their own way when Sean and Seosaimh get on the track of prizes.

Two more new members are **Nell Shelley** and **Marion Watters.** With their first attempt they became prize-winners, and if they continue as they have begun, we'll have some very keen contests next year.

The Northern members of the Guild are not as numerous as we would expect. **Mollie Montgomery** of Belfast and **Nellie McNeill** of Glenarm won prizes for their first essays, but no news of them since. There are many prizes awaiting the boys and girls of the North if they will only claim them. Surely there are hundreds of young folk around Ardoyne who could become very enthusiastic Gabrielites. Some young friends from Dungannon joined us lately ; we hope they will find the Guild a cosy corner.

To sum up, I can certainly say that I have a goodly number of young correspondents from far and near, and they may be sure that I treasure their acquaintance and friendship very much. I now ask each one to recruit as many **new** memebrs as possible, so that next year's record will be more brilliant than ever. Remember—**all** are heartily welcome.

I know you will all be delighted with the photographs of the prizewinners. Of course, as anyone can see at a glance, there are several others whose photos do not appear ; but this is not the Editor's fault, for he wrote to **all** the prizewinners of 1923 whose addresses he knew, asking them to send on their photos. We would like to publish photos of all the members of the Guild, but as there are so many of us, it would be absolutely impossible. Francis offers his heartiest congratulations to all who won prizes in the Guild from the very beginning to the present time ; and to those who have not yet been successful he says : " Try again, and keep on trying ; for perseverance is always rewarded."

Once more, my dear young friends, I wish you all a very merry Xmas and all sorts of good luck in the New Year. I must now let you read the short story and little play (which have been written specially for yourselves), so bye-bye for the present. I hope to meet you all in the pages of " THE CROSS " during 1924.

" A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM."

(A Children's Xmas Story.)

Little Deirdre rubbed her big, somnolent, brown eyes and gazed around the bright hospital ward.

She had just awakened from a refreshing sleep and was cheered by the sight of the clustering holly berries gleaming redly, here and there, amid the gay greenery of the festoons that the kindly nurses had put up during the day to make the wards pleasant for the little, suffering children during the Christmas season.

Little Deirdre had rested on her back there for a long time. Many months before she had been carried into the hospital in an unconscious condition, and one of the nurses, attracted by the golden-headed, sad-faced child, had called her Deirdre—child of sorrow. Her spine was injured irreparably and the doctors feared she could never walk again.

To escape domestic trouble, her father had gone to America and her mother in a fit of rage and resentment had kicked her child, thus disabling her for life.

The beautiful, warm ward, with the blue clad nurses flitting about like busy bees, was a wonderful change of environment for the poor, utterly neglected waif. Glancing around her this Christmas Eve with admiring eyes, she at last espied on the centre of the long table a tiny crib. What lovely, little toy was this she wondered. She had never seen anything like it before. The one whose duty it was to teach, guard and protect her had failed her in her need. The necessities of the young mind had not been ministered to, but despite those losses she remained a beautifully simple and innocent child, and hers was a lily soul glowing in the sunlight of God's love.

"Nurse, nurse," Deirdre called out, suddenly, in rapture, "nurse, where did the little baby come from?" "Don't you know that is little Jesus—the wee Iosagan Who came down from Heaven long ago to save us," answered the kindly nurse, and sitting on the edge of the bed she related the wonderful story of the Baby Christ to eager listening ears. Deirdre drank in every word of the marvellous story as she solemnly gazed on the crib full of thought and understanding.

"That is a good Mother in the blue cloak," said she suddenly, looking at the nurse with tear-filled eyes, "and she loves her little Baby, but my mother does not love me."

"But the Infant Jesus loves you," said the nurse gently, "and if you ask Him He will teach your mother to love you too." "But would He help a lame child that couldn't play with Him?" sobbed Deirdre.

"He loves all little children, but little sufferers are especially dear to His kind Heart."

"Then I will love that little Baby, and I will take Him in my arms," said Deirdre wiping away her tears, "and I will ask Him to give me a nice, kind mother like His own."

Caressing the touzled curls, and whispering "if you love Him He will give you all you ask," the gentle nurse glided out of the ward leaving her small charge to converse with and tell her troubles to the little Infant Jesus to Whom no pleading is made in vain.

A year has passed away. It is again the eve of the great festival of Christmas. In a small provincial town a weary, bitter-faced woman stumbles up the cobbled street muttering incoherently. The hour is late, and she is in search of her missing child. Some invisible power, some inward prompting draws her onward and eventually she finds herself at the open door of the old, grey-washed church.

Pausing on the threshold she fears to enter. She has not been inside its portals for many years. Sin-laden, she is hard and unrepentant. Suddenly from within a child's voice falls upon her ear. There is a violent struggle going on within the woman's soul. Unconsciously she is drawn onward until she finds herself within the precincts of the church. Where did this sobbing come from? Where is her child? Looking around she sees no one near. At the farther end of the church a few remaining penitents are still grouped outside the Canon's confessional. The sound has not come from that quarter—it is nearer. Again a low sob breaks the silence—there is a rustling as of straw. It is coming from the crib. She moves in that direction and a moment later sees her sorrow-burdened child crouching in the rough wisps leaning pathetically over the manger, while her tears fall upon the tender Face of the Infant as she sobs and moans in recurrent refrain . . "Oh, little Jesus . . little Jesus give me a mother like Your Mother . . Oh, little Iosagan, teach her to love me!"

The listening woman is suddenly conscience-stricken, a dagger-thrust of pain smites her hardened heart and the latent spark of motherhood flames anew within her breast followed by swift realization of her sinfulness. In sudden remorse she throws herself at the Feet of the little Infant Saviour, while her heart softens and tears of repentance and sorrow well within her eyes. In passionate supplication she begs Him to listen to her own, and to her child's, pleading and to have compassion upon them in their need.

For long she remains prostrate praying in the dim, shadowy light until a God-sent spirit of peace and love descends upon her. Then gathering her little crippled child into her arms, she folds her to her newly-awakened mother heart, where ever after Deirdre finds sanctuary and rest.

It is but another triumph of the Crib.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO !

THE CHRISTMAS GUEST.

A Play in One Act (Gathered from a French Story)

BY MINNIE MORTIMER.

Characters :

MAURICE MEDWAY (a miller).
MADELAINE (his wife).
JAMES, TERESA } (their children).
DOROTHY, PETER } (little guests).
A BEGGAR BOY.
OUR LADY.
ST. JOSEPH.

SCENE—The miller's living room. Madelaine discovered seated by the fire, sewing.

Enter Maurice, a letter in his hand. He looks much distressed.

MAURICE :

Dear wife, I fear that news unwelcome
Hath come to us this Christmastide.
This letter is from Lawyer Telcombe—
Alas !——

(He hesitates, reads letter again, shakes his head sorrowfully.)

MADELAINE :

Husband, your grief confide.
Am I not wife and helpmate ? Sharer
Of your distress ? Speak, speak, I pray !

MAURICE :

Ah woe ! that I should be the bearer
Of tidings ill this Christmas Day !
(He approaches Madelaine, leans over her chair, hands letter.)
Read !

(She peruses letter ; gives a cry of distress.)

MADELAINE (reading from letter) :

" Mortgage called in " ! This is distressing !
How shall we meet it ? What to do ?
£500 to pay ! A blessing
If we possessed one half.!

MAURICE :

Ay, true !

MADELAINE :

How shall we raise the mortgage money ?
(Reflects.)
A trifling sum I've saved with care,—
(Lays her hand on Maurice's)
Saving is sweet as honey !
But now—! (Sighs.)

MAURICE :

Our savings we can't spare.
What ? Part with our hard-earned possessions
To pay this claimant stern of heart ?
(May the Lord pardon his transgressions !)
No, Madelaine, we will not part
With any of your patient hoarding . . .
Yet, what to do ?

MADELAINE (sorrowfully) :

Ay, what to do ?

(Loud clapping of hands heard off stage.)

MAURICE :

What's that ?

MADELAINE :

Our little ones, applauding
Some childish project—pleasure new.
(She pauses.)
Husband, just now—following fatal
News—I fear me to confide
The children's scheme . . 'Tis the natal
Day of Teresa—Christmastide.

The little one was so delighted
When I consented to her plea
That two small guests should be invited
Here, to partake of cakes and tea,
And share our children's sport right merry.
Are you displeased ?

MAURICE (shaking his head) :

No, not I !
This day our cares, dear, we must bury,
Rejoicing that the Lord is nigh.

MADELAINE :

Yes ! Let us trust in God's dear kindness ;
His Heart is merciful and wide,
Even to those who, in their blindness,
Forget His coming at Yuletide.

Enter James and Teresa joyously. They romp about the stage.

CHILDREN :

Hurrah ! Hurrah ! Our guests are coming !

(They clap their hands.)

TERESA (approaching her mother) :

Oh, mother, put that work away !

(Madelaine strokes her hair.)

TERESA (to her father) :

Did you hear naughty Jamie drumming
Upon the window pane ?

JAMIE (mischievously) :

'Twas play !

MAURICE (to Jamie) :

Be careful, sonny. Come, Teresa,
Haven't you got a kiss for me ?

(She kisses him.)

TERESA (proudly) :

I'm six to-day !

(Jamie pulls her hair.)

TERESA (to Jamie) :

Oh, don't !

MAURICE (to Jamie) :

Don't tease her.

TERESA :

Dear mother, may I get the tea ?

(Madelaine nods approval.)

TERESA (laying cloth) :

She'll soon be here—dear little Dolly ;
Her brother Peter is coming, too.
We're going to have some nice games—

JAMIE (clapping his hands) :

How jolly !

(To Maurice)

You must teach us something new.

(Maurice smiles, pats Jamie on head.)

MAURICE :

I vote we sing a Yuletide anthem
To greet the Holy Child.

CHILDREN (eagerly) :

We will !

MAURICE (gazing fondly at his wife and children) :

(Aside)

May the dear Saviour deign to grant them
True happiness—their hearts to fill !

(Meantime Madelaine assists Teresa to prepare tea.)

(A Christmas hymn, or carol, is now introduced. At finish, loud knocking at door.)

CHILDREN :

They've come ! (They rush to the door.)

MAURICE (to Madelaine) :

Dearest, my heart feels lighter—
The Lord will help our sore distress !

MADELAINE (smiling) :

Ay ! The warm sun oft shines out brighter
When hearts are full of earnestness.

MAURICE (thoughtfully) :

' The darkest cloud hath a silver lining ' !
Then let us wait—and watch in prayer.

MADELAINE (clasping her hands) :

And waiting, set aside repining,
Trusting to Him our grievous care !

Meanwhile children receive their guests. Salutations, hand-shakes, etc.)

TERESA :

Tea's ready ; though I do not boast it !
Mother will serve.

MADELAINE (surveying table) :

Well done, well done,
My little daughter ! Have you toasted
The scones ?

TERESA (nodding) :

They're here ; I've not burnt one !

(All seat themselves at table.)

MAURICE (to guests) :

My children, we're well met together—
My hearty greetings to you all !

GUESTS (to Maurice and family) :
Greetings to you !

MAURICE (glancing towards window) :
This wintry weather
Is pleasant . . . snow begins to fall.

DOROTHY :
How nice it is to be so cosy !
What should we do without a home ?

PETER :
We wouldn't be so well and rosy,
But pale and thin, if we'd to roam
Abroad like beggars !
(Maurice and his wife exchange significant glances.)

JAMIE (with assurance) :
That won't happen !

PETER :
Fancy if rags we had to wear !

JAMIE (tittering) :
See me in rags—and with no cap on !

TERESA :
The snow would cover up your hair !

DOLLY :
I pity beggars who come pleading
For warmth and shelter, food—poor things !

PETER (thoughtfully) :
Yet some content are to be leading
A life of poverty.
(A voice heard singing outside.)

MADELAINE :
Who sings ?
(All listen. Air : "The snow lay on the ground.")

BEGGAR (outside) :

I.

The snow lies on the ground—the wind blows cold
And I, a beggar child, to you unfold
A tale of sore distress . . Come and behold !
(Madelaine rises, goes to the window and looks out.)

II.

A little warmth I crave—a little cheer ;
I ask a humble alms ; 'twill not cost dear.
Ah, pity my distress, my falling tear !

MADELAINE :
Maurice, my heart is wrung with pity !
A little beggar boy I see.
(Maurice rises and joins her at window, they look out and whisper together.)

DOROTHY (clasping her hands) :
Oh, what a sweet and mournful ditty !

TERESA (eagerly) :
Mother, the boy shall have my tea !
Madelaine goes to door and admits beggar child. He is clothed in rags and covered with snow. He weeps bitterly. Madelaine leads him to the fire, where she soothes him. Maurice joins her in compassionating the child. The children look sorry for him.)

TERESA (running to the little beggar) :
Poor little boy ! I am so sorry !
(She embraces and kisses him.)
Oh, make him warm, please, mother, do !

MAURICE (patting her cheek) :
We will attend to him ; don't worry !

TERESA (wistfully) :
Couldn't he have my jersey blue ?
(Madelaine smiles at her encouragingly.)

MAURICE (to Madelaine) :
Take the poor child upstairs and dress him
In something warm ; he is our guest.

MADELAINE (taking the beggar in her arms) :
Would I were your mother—bless him !
To comfort him I'll do my best !
(She gently leads him off stage. Maurice leads Teresa back to table.)
TERESA (to Maurice, pointing to her chair) :
He must sit in my post of honour !
(He nods approval, she sits on next chair.)
My cake all sugared, he shall eat !
(Shows it to Maurice. He smiles.)

MAURICE :
God bless the kindly little donor !

PETER (emphatically) :
The beggar boy deserves a treat !
He is so ragged !

DOROTHY (joyfully) :

I've a penny —
He shall have it !

PETER :

Mine, too !

JAMIE :

And mine !

TERESA :

You have a penny each ? I have many !
He shall have all ! I have got nine !

JAMIE (proudly) :

I've got a top that spins and hums, too
I'll give it to the beggar boy.
And I have got a hoop—and drum, too—
He shall have both ; they'll bring him joyj

DOROTHY :

I've got a dolly—such a treasure !
Boys don't like dolls—but if he'd care
To have it—and it gives him pleasure—
He's welcome. It's got golden hair.

TERESA :

I've got a woollen jersey, Mother
Gave to me, on Christmas Day.
'Twill keep him warm ! I have another,
So the new one I'll give away.

(Enter Madelaine, leading beggar child. He is warmly clad in some of Jamie's clothes, and little Teresa's blue jersey.)

JAMIE (aside to Teresa) :

How nice he looks !

TERESA (to beggar) :

Sit next to me, please !
I love you little boy—I do !

(Beggar smiles, sits next to her.)

TERESA (handing him her tea) :

And will you drink this cup of tea, please ?
This sugared cake is for you, too.

BEGGAR (to Teresa) :

I thank you. Pray, what is your name, dear ?

TERESA :

Teresa. I am six to-day.

BEGGAR (thoughtfully) :

It is my birthday.

TERESA (clapping her hands) :

Glad you came here !
And you must promise us you'll stay !

(Maurice, his wife and the other children listen with interest to conversation between beggar and Teresa.)

BEGGAR :

Ah, that I cannot promise, dearest.
I with my Mother must abide.

MAURICE (to Beggar) -

We should be glad if she would here rest ;
We welcome her this Christmastide.

MADELAINE :

Yes ! Will she not be of our party ?

BEGGAR (smiling) :

My Mother dear is far away . . .

MAURICE :

A pity ! But she has our hearty
Greetings this glad and festive day.

BEGGAR :

I thank you for your kindly greeting,
Your hospitality, and I
Promise you all a happy meeting
With my dear Mother, by and by.

MAURICE (to Beggar) :

Child, partake of our fare ; you're welcome !

(Aside to Madelaine)

Would I could send a little word
Of invitation to old Telcombe.

MADELAINE (aside to Maurice) :

I think his absence is preferred.
He'd only press us hard for payment ;
Threaten to turn us from our door !

MAURICE (aside to Madelaine) :

This beggar in his humble raiment
Teaches how blessed are the poor.
His manner—looks—so gentle, comely !
The rich possess not virtue high . . .
He makes our little dwelling homely,
Whose only shelter is the sky.

MADELAINE (aside to Maurice) :

Could we not, dear, persuade his mother
To share our dwelling ? Room we could find.
The little one would be a brother

To ours ; he is so meek, so kind.
(Tea is now over. Maurice, his family and guests rise.)

BEGGAR :

I must away.

TERESA (earnestly) :

Oh, please do stay here !
Dear little boy, I love you so !

BEGGAR :

Nay, I no longer can delay, dear ;
My Mother awaits me ; I must go.
(To all) Farewell ! (To Maurice) I thank you
(To Teresa) I will remember
Teresa . . . We will meet again ;
Not in the bleakness of December,
But when winter is on the wane . . .
The summer of our love united,
Dearest, you shall be my bride !
To my banquet be invited ;
And evermore with me abide.
Farewell ! (He embraces Teresa and goes off stage. All gaze after him in consternation.)

MAURICE :

The beggar child speaks wisely !
Strange words from youthful lips, say I !

MADELAINE :

Can he a royal prince in disguise be ?

TERESA (weeping) :

I miss him !

MADELAINE (soothing her) :

Nay, my dear, don't cry.

JAMIE :

(suddenly perceiving beggar's shoe lying on floor)
See ! he has left his shoe behind him !
(Runs and picks it up, hands it to his mother.)

MADELAINE (gazing at shoe thoughtfully) :

Poor little child ! His feet were numb.
(She sees cheque inside shoe, draws it out, opens it, utters a cry of amazement.)

A cheque ! A cheque ! Haste ! we must find him !
Examining cheque again)
£500. The mortgage sum !
(Maurice joins her, they gaze at cheque in joyous wonder. The children gather around them in great excitement.)

MAURICE (to Madelaine) :

Who is this child ?

MADELAINE :

A prince ! whose pleasure
It was with lowly folk to bide.
Teresa is his pet—his treasure . . .
He promised she should be his bride !
(They both gaze pensively at Teresa.)

TERESA (sorrowfully) :

Ah, where is he ? Pray find him mother !
It was a shame to let him go !
I nevermore shall find another
So sweet, so kind . . . I love him so !
(She clasps her hands together.)

MAURICE (to Madelaine) :

Come, let us search the woodland, prairie,
The hillside, valley, and the lea.
To find him must our patient care be . . .
Who can the little stranger be ?
(Maurice and family, etc., are about to quit their dwelling in search of the beggar, when Teresa suddenly perceives—in vision—the Holy Family, outside the window. She runs eagerly forward, flings wide the curtains, and gives a cry of surprised joy.)

TERESA :

He's there ! He's there ! And Holy Mary !
(She kneels in adoration of Holy Child. All see vision and fall on their knees in worship.)

MADELAINE :

Dear Heaven ! It was the Christchild fair
Who visited his creatures lowly !
To Him we owe our fortune rare !

OUR LORD (to Maurice and family) :

That which ye gave unto another—
A needy one—wholeheartedly,
Ye gave unto your loving brother . . .
Amen, ye did it unto Me !
He blesses them. All continue to adore Him.)

(CURTAIN.)

Nihil obstat:
JOANNES FITZPATRICK,
Censor Dep.

Imprimi Potest:
✠ ED. J. BYRNE,
ARCHIEP.
DUBLINEN.

CONTENTS.

	Page
*THE FOUNDER OF THE PASSIONISTS. By the Rev. Raymund Saunders, C.P.	1
CHRISTMAS AND THE GAEL. By Brian O'Higgins	5
*THE PASSIONISTS IN IRELAND. By the Rev. Joseph Smith, C P.	7
*THE GLORY OF OVADA (Poem). By Brian O'Higgins	13
WON BY LOVE. By Louise M. Stacpoole Kenny	14
*MOUNT ARGUS—ITS FIRST GREAT SORROW. By the late John Cashel Hoey	19
IN THE NOON OF NIGHT. By Eleanor F. Kelly	22
HOME—SWEET OR BITTER MEMORIES? By the Rev. Wilfrid Brodie, C.P.	27
MRS. ST. ROPE'S BRIDESMAID By John Ayscough	30
BETHLEHEM. By the Very Rev. Boniface Connolly, C.P	37
ONE CHRISTMAS EVE. By Margaret McGarvey	41
IRISH POETRY OF TO-DAY. By M. J. McManus	45
NEW YEAR HOPES AND JOYS. By Patrick Walshe, B.A.	50
NODLAIG NA LEANBHAI By Muiris na Mona	51
TO A PASSIONIST (Poem). By Lionel Johnson	52
NODLAIG (Poem). By Lilian M. Nally	52
CHRISTMAS DAY AND ST. STEPHEN'S DAY. By the Rev. Michael Palmer, C.P.	53
WEAK BACKS. By Hamilton Craigie	55
THE CASE OF THOMPSON. By B. Square	56
ST. STEPHEN (Poem). By J. Corson Miller	57
BOOK REVIEWS	58
GUILD OF ST. GABRIEL FOR OUR YOUNG READERS. By "Francis"	59

Articles marked thus * have been reproduced by special request from *Ovada*, now long out of print.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS—FOUNDER OF THE PASSIONISTS	*Facing page*	1
OVADA—NATIVE TOWN OF ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS	,,	8
WHERE ST. PAUL WAS BORN: WHERE HE DIED	,,	9
SCALA SANTA, ROME	,,	16
OLD MOUNT ARGUS	,,	17
MOUNT ARGUS IN THE MAKING	,,	24
MOUNT ARGUS OF THE PRESENT DAY	,,	25
THE RECTORS OF MOUNT ARGUS.—I.	,,	32
THE RECTORS OF MOUNT ARGUS.—II.	,,	33
THE RECTORS OF MOUNT ARGUS.—III.	,,	40
THE RECTORS OF MOUNT ARGUS.—IV.	,,	41
CONTRIBUTORS TO *THE CROSS ANNUAL*	,,	56
ST. GABRIEL'S GUILD—PRIZEWINNERS, 1924	,,	57

ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS.

FOUNDER OF THE PASSIONISTS.

The Cross Annual

1924–1925.

THE FOUNDER OF THE PASSIONISTS.

By the Rev. RAYMUND SAUNDERS, C.P.

OVADA, like a flower, scented, sunlit, shining in the blue, raises its head above the fairest vale that even Italy knows. In that lovely land,

"Where suns unclouded shine thro' purest air,"

verily like a flower, Ovada, distils in fragrant dews throughout the world, the odorous sweetness of a Saint of God.

Ovada, heaven's appointed place, to it was given to greet the birth of that flower of the Passion, that rose of the Cross—Paolo Francesco Danei—Saint of the Crucified, Paul of the Cross; for here, on the 3rd of January, 1694, he came into life.

In imagination one lingers to recall the story of his earliest movements towards God, to hear his tiny lips, like birds at morning, lisp his primal prayers, to watch his soul unfolding, like some opening flower.

God's protecting hands above him, a mother's loving arms about him, unsullied and unstained, his infant years verge to youth with every portent and promise of sanctity. Scarce a dozen years are passed, and lo! divine vision and even ecstasy bind his soul in divinest union to God, "set his soul among the stars," and among the favoured few. God's own mother becomes his protectress: she will shield him from bodily ill! Once, it is recorded, when a tiny boy, whilst wandering by the river's brink, he accidentally slipped from the bank, and had all but drowned, when, behold a beauteous shining figure reached towards him and gentle hands placed him in safety once more. His rescuer was, as he himself tells us, our Blessed Lady herself! From that hour, till his death, he never ceased to be devout to Mary, and to celebrate her feasts with manifest grateful joy.

Ten years of life Ovada shared with him—years of happy childhood, years of dawning youth—hasting days,

Flying on with full career, ripening his just soul to dwell with God.

Then the scene was changed.

. . . . . .

Ovada, like a flower, fades to a memory, and Castellazzo, like a star, shines upon his path, for it was here he dwelt from his tenth till his twenty-sixth year.

Ovada, like a flower, opens on his innocence: Castellazzo shines with the lustre of his penance—but penance voluntary and self-imposed—not merited or incurred. Who shall ever appreciate the daily thirst that consumed this soul for suffering, for conformity to his Lord, torn with scourges, beaten and bruised and broken?

Fasts, and prayers, and scourges, these

were his continual exercises. When the silent town lay sleeping, he was waking, keeping vigil with the stars ; when the heedless town was feasting, he was faring hard on scanty morsels of coarsest food, and yielding himself to scourges, long and gory! Never did he rest at Castellazzo by night or day, till he had come to bear at last in his own body the very wounds of his Saviour, till he could truly say to his thirsting soul, " with Christ I am nailed to the Cross." This was the image ever before his eyes ; this was the subject of his constant thoughts ; this was the secret as it was the motive of all these days and nights of penance. Truly a Passionist he was in anticipation long before he became one in designation and dress. Thus it was here, as he tells us, that he saw himself in vision clothed in a black dress reaching to the ground, with a white cross on his breast, and under the cross the most holy name of " Jesus," written in white letters, and, at the same instant, heard these words addressed to him :—" This is for a sign how pure and white that heart must be which has to bear engraved upon it the most holy Name of Jesus."

This habit, first seen in vision, he received soon afterwards in reality, on the 22nd of November, 1720, in his twenty-seventh year. Feeling himself called by God to institute in the Church an Order of men, especially devoted to practising and preaching the Passion of Christ, he began now in obedience to his bishop, to write the rule of the new institute. In what manner he wrote he thus tells :—" I began to write this holy Rule on the 2nd of December, 1720, and finished it on the 7th. I wish you to know that when I wrote, I wrote as fast as if there had been one in a professor's chair dictating to me. I felt the words come from my heart, a particular inspiration from God."

The Passionist's habit was therefore seen in Divine vision ; the Passionist's rule was written under Divine inspiration. Castellazzo was destined to see the beginning of his life's task : in other paths and under other skies we must look for—

The perfect work, through years of toil
achieved, at length
With finished beauty crowned.

. . . . . .

The traveller along the western shore of Italy, beholds over the Tuscan city of Orbetello, the towering form of a lofty mountain. Steep is the climb to its summit, but the weary climber is rewarded by the beauty of the landscape around. When the sun shines, the tired senses are refreshed with the sweetest odours of myrtle, rosemary, wild thyme and wormwood, and, solitude, tense and throbbing, lends itself to further soothe and please. The place is called Monte Argentaro, and it is here, in this secluded scene, that Paul of the Cross next appears to us.

How he loved this mountain! How he steeped his soul in its solitude, and transferred its spirit even to his new institute, whose houses he directs in the Rule : " shall be constructed in retired places, far from the noise of the world "!

Here he built the first house or retreat, assembled his first companions, founded his novitiate. How favourable was Heaven to his work we may know from this, that Our Lady herself appeared to him, and gave him clearly to understand in what spot precisely she was pleased he should build his first church and retreat. He obeyed, and placed the new building under her patronage, calling it the Retreat of the Presentation. How rapidly this first foundation led to others we may see from the fact that before he died, our saint had already made similar foundations at Vetralla, Soriano, Cecano, Toscanella, and Rome. But to the end Monte Argentaro was ever first in his heart and preference. He was bound to it by sorrow as well as joy, for it was from here he had made so many a fruitless journey to Rome, repulsed and refused by officious underlings there, returning home again and again defeated, dejected and almost despairing, until at last, in 1725, his sorrows were all assuaged by receiving from the then Holy

Father, Benedict XIII., permission to found the new Congregation under his special apostolic protection. This same Pope himself ordained him priest, and sent him forth on a mission to preach authoritatively to the world the Passion of Christ, and to take as the special motto of the new institute—" We preach Christ Crucified." What wonder then that he loved Monte Argentaro best of all, and used to call it the cradle of his Congregation, his " mons sanctificationis," the Mount of Sanctification? Here it was that he first set before an astonished world, tender and indulgent of itself, that mode of living, so trying and self-denying, which constitutes a Passionits's life. At every midnight he rose to chant the office of Matins, and then, after having thus broken his nightly rest, he rose again, after a short sleep, at 6 o'clock for Prime and Mass : he went barefoot or used only sandals : he fasted three days a week, and all Advent and Lent : he made a feature of the free use of the discipline or scourge in his rule of life, adding also the practice of observing long silences during the day-time. So he constituted the life of a Passionist—a combination of action and contemplation : he sends him forth into the world to give missions and retreats and above all to preach the Passion : then he bids him return home again to prepare himself in silence, solitude and prayer for further action. Besides the three usual vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, the Passionist takes a fourth vow to keep alive in the hearts of men the memory of Christ's Passion. As a writer has well said :—" St. Paul of the Cross has not only founded a new Religious Order : he has instituted a new order of Religious! "

It was in the stillness of Monte Argentaro also that he prepared himself above all for those wonderful missions for which he became renowned. Truly all his early life had been devoted to fitting himself for this, his favourite work. The list of his missions extends to every town of note in the Italian provinces : for twelve years, without a break, he laboured in this work in the dioceses of Acquapendente, Grosseto and Masso : without an extraordinary grace to support him, he must have surely sunk under such labours. The reports given of his missions describe the people everywhere as crowding to the sermons and to confession and wonderful conversions ensuing, with entire towns changing their moral aspect, as the result of his moving words and example. He carried his labours into the dioceses of Viterbo and Toscanella, Sutrio and Nepi, Montefiascone, Corneto, Ovieto, Orte, Porto, Sabina, Perugia, Camerino, Ferentino, Terracina, Piperno, and many others. In this great work he continued even till his seventy-fifth year, which was his age, when he gave his last mission in Rome itself.

What wonder that on hearing of the effects produced by St. Paul's missions, Pope Benedict XIV., who had confirmed and approved the new institute, was heard to exclaim : The Congregation of the Passion is the last to come into the world, but ought, as it seems, to have been the first!" It is worthy of note that the Passionist Order has been confirmed and fixed for ever in the Church, by no less than four Popes, viz. : Benedict XIV., Clement XIII., Clement XIV., and Pius VI. ; and all these, moreover, had admitted to their closest intimacy and confidence the holy and humble Paul of the Cross. Clement XIV. spoke very extraordinary words about him : " He is a saint, and I never go about without bearing upon my person a letter I once received from him. I trust to his prayers almost more than anything else to save the Church of God."

The secret of his power thus to move men of all classes and ranks, as he himself well knew, was his absorption in the Passion of his Lord and his deep interior love of the Cross. The Evil One himself even made the same acknowledgement, for we read how on one occasion, when a person possessed was being exorcised by a holy priest, in answer to the latter's question as to what displeased him most in Father Paul, the answer came furiously and frequently, " the Passion—the Passion! "

It is the dominant note in all Paul's life! It is all the Cross and Passion : the Cross, the Cross! From infancy to youth and from youth to manhood—from Ovada to Monte Argentaro —and on to Rome even, to extremest age, it is ever the one impassioned burden—" With Christ I am nailed to the Cross! "

Thus under the shadow of the Cross he lived, and died. Early prevented by Divine grace, early enriched by Divine gifts, wonderful and great were his achievements for God's glory and men's souls. Having founded his poor Congregation and established it in twelve houses, he had nothing more now to desire but " to be dissolved and to be with Christ," to receive that crown of justice which the Just Judge will give in the Day. And so, as the shadows lengthen and his night of life gathers in, the scene once more, and for ever, changes unto the Eternal City and unto Eternity.

. . . . . .

Rome—the eternal city, ever ancient yet ever new, like a mother, tending and tender, took him to her mighty heart and lulled him at last to rest untroubled, unbroken, unending. Indeed for him :—

Life's best things gather round its close,
To light it from the door.

For old age came upon him and found him persevering in prayer, persistent still in mortification, proved and purified by suffering, still in soul and body nailed with Christ to the Cross. Rome had received him many a time in the past, now as a pilgrim, now as a priest, now as a missionary, but here at last she received him as a resident, and that at the request of none other than the Holy Father himself, Pope Clement XIV. What consolation this last tribute of affectionate approval must have afforded his heart, coming as it did from the Chair of Peter! It was indeed as if the Holy Father knew that in no better way could he mark his approval of Paul's work than by giving him thus a house for his new Congregation in the heart of Christendom itself—Rome, where every Order of standing must have a Mother house. Who then can imagine his happiness when, at the invitation of the Sovereign Pontiff, he took up his fixed abode for the remaining days of his life in Rome, making on the Celian Hill a retreat for his loved Congregation at the Basilica of SS. John and Paul. Now content indeed could he lay himself down to die eighty summers past and gone, ripe and ready and restless to be " at home with God." But two short years had he to wait for the summons on the Celian Hill, for on the 18th of October, 1775, the Feast of St. Luke, having received as Viaticum that Holy Communion which ever through life had been his daily food, comforted, resigned, peaceful, passing as it were into a tranquil sleep, full of days and rich in merits, he closed his eyes upon this fading world to open them upon the unfading Vision of His God and eternity. For him indeed :—

Life's best thing gathered round its close,

for, though dead, he was still to live—to live in his name and fame as a Saint of God, canonised as such in 1867 by the Voice of that Church, to whose service, while living, he gave himself, and to which, though dead, he still gives himself, in the persons of his faithful sons, whom he has gathered round him, to preach to the world the ignominies and the glories of the Cross and the Passion.

CHRISTMAS AND THE GAEL.

BY BRIAN O'HIGGINS.

"At Christmas, Christmas in Ireland, long ago.
Without the wind might bluster and without the wind might blow,
Within was peace among us and the kind word to and fro—
At Christmas, Christmas in Ireland, long ago."

SO sang a sweet poet of our own day, recalling to our minds the kindliness and peace associated with the holy season of Christmas in the Ireland of our fathers. It is a true picture. No matter how bitter the feuds between families or clans, no matter how long people had passed each other by without speaking, the coming of Christmas wiped out all the darkness and shed again the light of love and friendship on heart and tongue and mind. No other season of the year held such a store of charm and delight for the Gael as Christmas, and pity 'tis that its real significance and real source of joy should be on the wane in our day, and that our idea of Christmas enjoyment should tend, as in some other countries, towards vulgarity and gluttony.

The Gaels of old held Christmas in such high esteem that they named December *Mí na Nodhlag*, or the month of Christmas, as they gave the Mother of the Christ-Child the special title of *Muire*, as distinct from *Máire*, the name of any ordinary Mary ; and the highest honour they could pay to their own St. Brigid was to call her the Foster Mother of Christ, and name her the Mary of the Gael. There are many explanations of the Word Nodhlaig itself, but the Irish scholars seem to be at variance about it, and puzzled as to its real meaning. Some of the derivations are very plausible, but they are little better than guesses, and so the true meaning of the Irish name of the world's greatest Feast remains enveloped in mystery.

Perhaps no country on earth had more beautiful customs and beliefs connected with Christmas than our own land, and every effort should be made to keep them alive where they are still to be found, and to revive them where, like many other priceless possessions, they have been thrown away. One of the loveliest was the custom of placing a lighted candle in an unshuttered window at the front of each house on Christmas Eve, in memory and in honour of the first Christmas Night, and of the holy Wayfarers who made their way over rough roads through darkness, and against whom every door in the town of Bethlehem was shut. Our Gaelic ancestors vowed in their hearts that never in this land of hospitality should there be a wanderer, no matter how poor or lowly, abroad at the holy season, without food or warmth or shelter, and so they placed the candle in the window and left the door wide open until midnight, and all who came the way were sure of food and rest. It was believed, too, that at midnight, the Mother of God and her little Babe, came into each house in which peace and goodwill dwelt, and left their blessing there for evermore. Nowhere is this simple belief so beautifully illustrated as in *An Mháthair* (The Mother) by Pádraig Pearse. The story which gives its title to the book is of a heart-hungry, childless mother who sat by the fireside on Christmas Eve, waiting to present her petition to the Mother of God. There is no more poignant pen-picture than that story in the literature of the world.

When I was a boy there was, in our part of the country, another custom which I have not been able to find anywhere else, and which has now died out. For about three weeks before Christmas we young fellows went out night after night on the hills and kept blowing horns for over an hour. The group of horn-blowers in our townland was answered by another group a mile away, and so it went all over the country side every night, and finished on December 24th. The old people told us it was done as long as they and their parents before them could remember, and that the object of it was to keep the wolves away from the Lamb of God.

Another belief was that on Christmas Eve, at midnight, the beasts in every stable went down on their knees in honour and in memory of the Stable at Bethlehem, and it was said that any person who remained awake and went to the byre of the cattle at that hour would obtain from the Infant Saviour any special grace or favour asked for. In all the customs of Christmas there was evidence of that great, simple, childlike faith of the Gaelic Race, which our enemies and traducers would like to call superstition, but which was the unseen bond that kept our people very near to God during all the ages of sorrow and persecution and defeat.

There are scores of stories and legends connected with Christmas of the Gael, and one of the most touching concerns the little outcast of the bird kingdom, the wren, and tells us why it is he is hunted from hedge to hedge on Christmas Day until he is finally killed, to be carried from door to door next day by the "wren boys," who solicit subscriptions from the woman of the house to defray the expenses of his funeral. If you have read " My New Curate " you can guess how the money goes, in a great many instances. The old story is that when the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph were fleeing into Egypt with the Infant Jesus, to save Him from the swords of Herod's soldiers, they passed by a field where a *meitheal*, or working party of men, were sowing wheat. Our Holy Mother and the Divine Infant were seated on the back of an ass, whose steps St. Joseph directed over the rough, stony ground, while the blood from his own poor, travel-bruised feet stained with red spots the way he walked. He asked the men if strangers came enquiring whether such travellers as they had passed the way, to say : " Yes, when we were sowing the corn." The soldiers of Herod appeared next day, pursuing the Holy Family, but the men in the field said in reply to their questions : " No such persons have passed here since the day we were sowing the corn " ; and they pointed to the wheat which had miraculously grown to its full ripeness during the night. And here is where the *draoilí* or wren—sometimes called a chafer—comes in to the story.

He was seated on a branch close by, the story says, and when he heard the reply of the reapers, he squeaked out : "*indé, indé*" (" yesterday, yesterday "), but the soldiers did not understand, and they gave up the chase. The blood was still fresh upon the ground where St. Joseph had paused to speak to the workers, and by this the soldiers might have tracked the Holy Family had not a little robin, all the time they were questioning the reapers, busied herself covering over the bloodstains with leaves, so that they were hidden from the gaze of the soldiers. That is how the robin got her red breast (there is another story as to how she got it, but that does not concern us now) and why she is called " Mary's little one," and is loved by the Irish people, while the wren is hated and hunted by them ever since because of his treachery to the Babe of Bethlehem. It is a nice story, but the hunting and killing of the wren is not in keeping with the spirit of Christmas, and should be discontinued. Our Lord forgave the penitent thief on the Cross ; He forgives us our most grievous sins, and I am sure He has long since forgiven the poor little wren who was, after all, more loose-tongued and indiscreet than treacherous or vindictive. It is a cowardly thing for men and boys to hunt to

death, and glory in doing so, the poor, weak little bird that cannot utter a word of protest against their cruelty or offer the least resistance to their blows.

Let us hope that this custom will soon die out, and that all the old beautiful ones which we have allowed to fall into abeyance will be revived and perpetuated, that the time may soon come when we can throw wide our doors at the festive season and welcome to our firesides all those wanderers of the night to whom the lighted candle in the unshuttered window sends forth a welcoming glow, telling them that Christmas in Ireland is a time of hospitality, of kindliness, of peace and of love.

THE PASSIONISTS IN IRELAND.

BY THE REV. JOSEPH SMITH, C.P.

THE progress of the Passionist Order was rudely arrested shortly after the death of its Founder by the general upheaval of things in Europe, consequent on the French Revolution, and by the state of confusion and strife created by the pitiless sword of Napoleon. The period of comparative peace that followed was, of necessity, devoted to recuperation rather than expansion. Indeed, when the scattered members of the disbanded communities quietly stole back to their monastic homes they saw themselves confronted with the heavy task of beginning all over again the work which had occupied the life of their Founder—work which had been done with such patient and painful care and destroyed with such ruthless wantonness. They had to busy themselves with the task of re-building the new Institute almost from its foundations. Consequently, nearly the first half of the nineteenth century elapsed before any regular foundation of the Passionists was made outside Italy. But the subsequent story of the Order, from its restoration under Pius VII. to the present day, reminds one of the Gospel proverb : " Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." It has been all along a story of constant advance and development. For the past sixty or seventy years its progress has been so rapid and continual that at the present moment there are considerably over a hundred Passionist monasteries in existence in various and widely separated parts of the world : in Italy, Spain, France, Belgium, Holland, Bulgaria, Austria, Germany, Poland, China, Palestine, the United States, Mexico, Chile, Peru, the Argentine Republic, Australia, as well as in Great Britain and Ireland. And scarcely a year passes in which one or more new foundations are not made. Besides the male branch of the Congregation there is also an institute of Nuns devoted to the contemplative life, founded by St. Paul of the Cross towards the close of his career, and several Congregations of Sisters engaged in charitable works, which have been established at one time or another by the Passionist Fathers.

But we are not concerned in these pages so much with the world-wide development of the Congregation of the Passion as with its establishment in our own land. Throughout his long life St. Paul of the Cross had looked with longing towards the missionary opportunities afforded by northern lands, where the nefarious work of the sixteenth century " Reformers " had left the nations sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. He yearned to bring the message of salvation to those peoples, to uplift again among them the symbol of God's mercy—the Crucifix, so long

dishonoured and disowned. Especially did his thoughts and prayers turn to England, where the Reformation had made such a clean sweep of everything Catholic, and where the light of faith that had once shone so brilliantly had been almost totally trampled out. And when one day, late in life, he saw, in vision, his children working in England his joy was full.

Three-quarters of a century was to pass before the vision became a realtiy. Its fulfilment was brought about in a very remarkable way by a very remarkable man. The desire of St. Paul of the Cross was inherited in full measure by the Venerable Dominic of the Mother of God. His story may be briefly sketched in the words of Cardinal Newman, whom he was destined to receive into the Church. "On the Apennines, near Viterbo, there dwelt a shepherd-boy, in the first years of this century, whose mind had early been drawn heavenward ; and one day, as he prayed before an image of the Madonna, he felt a vivid intimation that he was destined to preach the Gospel under the northern sky. There appeared no means by which a Roman peasant should be turned into a missionary ; nor did the prespect open, when this youth found himself, first a lay-brother, then a Father, in the Congregation of the Passion. Yet, though no external means appeared, the inward impression did not fade ; on the contrary, it became more definite, and, in process of time, instead of the dim north, England was engraven on his heart. And, strange to say, as years went on, without his seeking, for he was simply under obedience, our peasant found himself at length upon the very shore of the stormy northern sea, whence Caesar of old looked out for a new world to conquer ; yet, that he should cross the strait was as little likely as before. However, it was as likely as that he should ever have got so near it ; and he used to eye the restless, godless waves, and wonder with himself whether the day would ever come when he should be carried over them. And come it did, not, however, by any determination of his own, but by the same Providence which thirty years before had given him anticipation of it."*

It was in 1841 that Venerable Dominic landed in England. There he lived and laboured for seven years, preaching in its cities and towns, instructing and admitting to the true fold many converts, gathering around him zealous companions, and laying firmly the foundations of his beloved Order. He met with a reward not unusual in the case of the pioneer who is also an apostle : he received scant sympathy, and was regarded with something like amused disdain even by his co-religionists ; he was stoned in the streets by the ignoant bigots he had come to reclaim ; he died, discouraged and broken-hearted, almost an outcast, at an obscure railway station. But the holiness and heroism of his life have not passed without recognition, for the official introduction of his cause of canonization thirteen years ago at Rome gives hope that he may ere long be enrolled in the catalogue of the Saints.

The connection of Venerable Dominic with Ireland was very slight. But it is noteworthy that the fellow-Passionist who accompanied him from Italy, and worked with him in England, was an Irishman ; and it is noteworthy also that the last mission he ever gave, and the first given by the Passionists in Ireland, was that which he preached at St. Audeon's, High Street, a few months before his death in 1849. Moreover, several young men had found their way from Ireland to Italy in their desire to serve God in the, as yet, obscure and unknown Congregation of the Passion. A writer in the *Orthodox Journal*, of Novemeber 26, 1842, describing a visit to the monastery of the Passionists on Monte Cavi, near Frascati, expresses his wonder at finding an Irishman in the community. " In the monastery we were surprised to find a native of the Emerald Isle. With two companions he had left his country to journey to the Eternal City in hopes of finding an oppor-

* Loss and Gain : pp. 376-377.

OVADA.

Room + in which St. Paul was born.

Room + in which he died.

tunity of entering the religious state. These men seem to possess a spirit as universal as the Church itself : there is scarcely a country under the sun in which they are not to be found."

During the ten or twelve years that followed the death of Venerable Dominic we hear of no endeavour to extend the Order to Ireland. Doubtless the pressure of work on the English mission and the paucity of subjects accounted for the delay. But soon a man appeared who was daunted by no difficulties. Father Vincent Grotti, a religious of striking personality and of remarkable powers in many respects, who had been a secular priest and a canon of the Cathedral Chapter of the Diocese of Viterbo, joined the English province shortly before Venerable Dominic's death. He quickly mastered the English language and became an able missionary. In the course of his apostolic labours he frequently visited Ireland, and conceived a boundless admiration and affection for its people. He at once began to cast about for a suitable foundation for the Passionists in the country of his predilection, so that we find him already, in 1852, in correspondence with Dr. Cullen, then Archbishop of Dublin, on the subject. The difficulty of finding a desirable site led to further delay, though the Archbishop expressed himself not only willing but anxious to have the Passionists in his diocese. When Father Vincent was elected Provincial, in 1854, he again visited Ireland, and had the good fortune to meet with the Rev. Matthew Collier, then a curate in the parish of Rathmines. In the course of conversation, this worthy priest, who remained a life-long and valued friend of the Passionists, asked Father Vincent why his Order had no house in Ireland. Hearing of the difficulty of obtaining a suitable site, Father Collier mentioned the property, then called Argus, near Harold's Cross, and subsequently brought Father Vincent to see it. On the occasion of their visit, however, Mrs. Byrne, the proprietress, was absent from home, and no negotiations could be entered into for its purchase.

In the month of April of the following year (1856) Father Vincent again returned to Dublin, and, finding that Mrs. Byrne was willing to part with the place, submitted to the Archbishop a statement of his intentions with regard to the foundation. His Grace, after consulting with his Chapter, informed Father Vincent that the sooner the foundation was made the better. The purchase was shortly afterwards concluded, to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, and the Passionists took possession of the property which they were the first to call (from the slight eminence which it occupies) *Mount* Argus, on the 15th of August, 1856.

On that day, the feast of the Assumption of Our Blessed Lady, the first Mass was celebrated in one of the rooms of the old house,* long since passed away. The celebrant of the Mass was Father Paul Mary Pakenham, who had been called from Rome to act as Superior of the new Retreat. Only five persons were present, including the Rev. Matthew Collier, Brother Seraphim, who was Father Paul's only companion as yet, and Mrs. Byrne, the late owner. Such was the modest beginning of the foundation at Mount Argus.

In a very short time a community of priests and lay-brothers was gathered from the other Passionist houses, and work began. Of the eight or nine members who formed that first religious family of St. Paul's Retreat all have long since gone to their reward.

It was not long before the little temporary chapel, fitted up in one of the largest rooms of the house, proved totally inadequate for the accommodation of the ever-increasing numbers that attended its services. The little congregation of five who had assisted at the first Mass had now so swelled that the room and the passages leading to it were thronged to suffocation, and many were obliged to kneel outside the building. This and the inconvenience of hearing confessions in the house

* See photograph elsewhere in this issue.

rendered it both desirable and necessary to set about the erection of a suitable chapel. Accordingly, a simple structure, connected with the house, was speedily commenced, the foundation stone being laid by Father Vincent Grotti on September 17th, 1856. The work was completed in three months and the building was solemnly dedicated to the service of God on December 19th of the same year, under the invocation of St. Patrick and Blessed Paul of the Cross.*

The work of the Fathers of Mount Argus was now fairly on its way, and everything promised happily. Applications for missions and retreats began to pour in ; the services of their little chapel were thronged by devout congregations ; the confessionals were crowded daily, as though a great mission were in progress; kind friends and generous benefactors rallied around with help to tide them over their early difficulties, when suddenly and almost without warning a heavy blow fell upon the little community. The Rector, Father Paul Mary Pakenham, of holy memory, died on the 1st of March. His death was a severe trial to the infant foundation, and the shock of it was felt far beyond Mount Argus—throughout Dublin, and even, we might say, throughout Ireland. Perhaps the best testimony we can give of the sensation caused by his death, and of the influence exercised by his character and personality during the few short months of his Rectorship at Mount Argus, is the article which appeared in *The Nation* of that week from the pen of its brilliant editor, John Cashel Hoey, and which we give elsewhere.

The death of such a man, especially at such a time was indeed a heavy affliction to the Congregation of the Passion in these countries. In a letter addressed to the Irish people a few days after his death Father Ignatius Spencer truly said : " Humanly speaking, and at first sight, the loss which we have met is beyond calculation, and might well discourage us. I do not speak of pecuniary loss. This loss might easily be calculated and repaired, and in this respect his death does not affect us here. He came to Ireland poor, like the rest of us : and poor he died. It was in other far more important respects that he was valuable to us. Had it not been that we possessed a subject fitted for the undertaking as he was, it is very probable that we should not have ventured, at least at this time, to attempt our first entrance, as an Order, into Ireland. It might seem as if Providence had called him amongst us on purpose to be the leader of our first colony in this country. There was everything, we may say, in him which would recommend him to the affections of the Irish people, and thus qualify him to do them good. . . . . He was indeed what a Passionist ought to be in his own character and at home. The time was not given him to show what he was calculated to be as a missionary. He died, as it is known, on the morning of the very day when he was to have spoken for the first time to his countrymen from a pulpit of Dublin, the city of his birth.* Had it pleased God to preserve his life and health, he would, I believe, have taken a worthy place among the noble army of apostolic men whom the Catholic Church has in all ages produced to defend the cause of God and truth. Fervent, devoted zeal for souls is the first, the vital quality of a missionary. This he had, and it was in a most remarkable way the spiritual necessities of his own dear country people which most peculiarly interested him."

Father Paul Mary Pakenham was succeeded as Rector by Father Osmund Maguire. During his rectorship it was decided to build a monastery which would accommodate a larger staff of priests—the then small community being unequal to the rapidly increasing demands of work—and which might also be used as a college or scholasticate for the students of the province. The first stone of the new

* St. Paul was not canonized until 1867.

* This is scarcely correct as he had preached at Mount Argus, and had assisted in giving at least one mission in Dublin.

building was laid with great ceremony and in presence of an immense concourse of people on June 13th, 1859, the sermon on the occasion being preached by Father Anderdon. The monastery, which occupied four years in erection, was completed in 1863, and was solemnly opened and blessed by Archbishop Cullen on September 8th of the same year. It was built from the designs of the well-known architect, Mr. J. J. McCarthy, who followed the general plan of the Passionist Retreats in Italy, with some modifications of detail to suit the climate and circumstances of the country. Early in the course of the work the builder repudiated his contract, through some misunderstanding, and the Fathers undertook and carried out the task of building themselves—in one respect a rather unfortunate circumstance, as it added very considerably to the cost.

The monastery is perhaps too well known to call for detailed description here. It consists, with the church, of three sides of a quadrangle. The whole of the exterior is built of finely chiselled granite, and although of great plainness of character and simplicity of style, it may still be said, considering its admirable proportions, its beautiful site, and the magnificent prospect it commands, not to be undeserving of the praise bestowed on it by one of the morning papers at the time of its opening, as "the noblest religious house erected in these countries since the Reformation."

In 1866 Father Osmund Maguire was transferred from Mount Argus and Father Alphonsus O'Neill appointed Rector in his stead. The new Rector considerably enlarged the temporary chapel and had a new organ erected. But practically nothing was done toward the erection of the present church except the laying of the foundation stone (June 29, 1866), until Father Dominic O'Neill (Father Alphonsus' brother) became Rector of Mount Argus in 1872. He courageously recommenced the building of the church on the 28th of April, 1873, and by his and his community's indefatigable efforts the work was brought to a successful conclusion in April, 1878. The church, which like the house is built from the designs of Mr. J. J. McCarthy, forms the eastern wing of the quadrangle, and is one of the most imposing ecclesiastical structures in Dublin.

It is in the Romanesque style of architecture, as are nearly all the churches of the Passionists throughout the world. The fine western front with its twin campanili, its ample porch, its graceful sculpture and mouldings gives that striking beauty and loftiness of effect of which one can never tell whether it be due to the majesty of the whole conception or the peculiar grace and delicacy of the details. Over the porch are set in niches eleven life-size statues of Our Divine Lord, the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, SS. Peter and Paul, St. John the Evangelist, St. Luke, St. Patrick, St. Laurence O'Toole, St. Bridget, St. Agnes. Above these a fine rose window fills the entire space between the bell towers, which run up in simple stateliness contrasting perfectly with elaborately carved window and tympanum. The latter deserves special notice. The subject, taken from the life of St. Paul of the Cross, is worked out in the granite facing in bold alto-relievo and fills the whole tympanum. The saint is represented standing on a platform preaching a mission sermon to the people crowding beneath. An angel whispers in his ear the words which are thrilling his audience, who are seen beating their breasts in sorrow or kneeling in an attitude of supplication, bewailing their sins and praying for pardon. The façade is crowned by a statue of St. Michael the Archangel, twelve feet high and richly gilt: the flaming sword held aloft and piercing the heavens may be seen in the sunshine of a clear day glittering from nearly any point for miles around.* The interior of the edifice, though still incomplete, will not

* Since the above was written the gilding has sadly perished

disappoint the admirer of its graceful and imposing exterior.

The solemn dedication of the church took place on April 28th, the feast of St. Paul of the Cross, 1878. His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. McCabe, afterwards Cardinal, officiated, and was assisted by the Most Rev. Dr. McGettigan, Archbishop of Armagh, and by their Lordships the Most Rev. Drs. Leahy, Gillooly, Donnelly, Conway and Fallon. Nearly a hundred of the secular and regular clergy, with the Lord Mayor of Dublin, were present. The dedication sermon was preached by the Most Rev. Dr. Leahy, Bishop of Dromore.

For many years afterwards the old chapel held its place in the grounds side by side with the magnificent pile which had deprived it of its usefulness. The last remaining relic of a holy past, it was clung to tenaciously by both priests and people. Many of the Fathers had been ordained within its walls or had celebrated their first Mass there. There, too, the people had knelt and prayed and received many a spiritual consolation from the days of their childhood when impressions are so easily and deeply made. The memories clinging around it were too sacred to be rudely disturbed, and so for fifteen years it was spared. But in 1893 a movement which had been set on foot to honour the memory of the revered Father Charles resulted in the decision to enlarge and enclose the cemetery attached to the Retreat. The old church was in the way and had to go. Where it stood there is now a beautiful cemetery, in every respect in keeping with the church and grounds of Mount Argus, sacred to the memory of Father Charles. There, resting in peace beneath the very spot where they had once laboured for God's glory, where they had preached His word and ministered to His poor, are the mortal remains of many who were associated with the early trials and struggles of Mount Argus and whose memories are still fresh, and fragrant with the good odour of sanctity, in the hearts of the people : Father Paul Mary Pakenham, the first Rector, and " the prime instigator of the movement " of coming to Ireland, as Father Ignatius Spencer once called him ; Father Osmund Maguire, (" dear Father Osmund," as he was familiarly called by the people) who built the present monastery and began the building of the church : Father Charles Houban, who sanctified Mount Argus for so many years by his virtues and sufferings, and who made its name a household word in Ireland and far beyond Ireland : Father Sebastian Keens, to whose indefatigable labours both church and monastery are heavily indebted ; Father Pacificus Farrell, who worked with the same enthusiasm in the service of His Divine Master as he had fought for the Vicar of Christ in the ranks of the Zouaves at Castelfidardo : Father Alphonsus O'Neill, silver-tongued orator, a prince of missionaries, founder of the Order in far-off Australia : Father Salvian Nardocci, the last of the Italian pioneers, who became more Irish than the Irish themselves and who laboured for nearly thirty years at Mount Argus. That is a bead-roll—and there are other names which might be added—in which any Order might feel a pardonable pride. These men are gone to their reward, but tender memories of them still linger around the place, and the work which they founded remains and bears daily abundant fruit for souls. Other religious have stepped into their places, and inspired by their example and their memory strive even though afar off to emulate their zeal. And so, though times and men and the outward aspect of things change, the same good work goes on, and will go on as long as the spirit of St. Paul of the Cross and of the Mystery of Mysteries which he preached presides over that hallowed spot which his successor in the Generalship of the Order called, after a visit there some years ago, *Il Monte Argentaro Irlandese*—the Irish Monte Argentaro—Mount Argus.

THE GLORY OF OVADA.

'Neath fair Italian skies, in far Ovada,
A boy grew up in saintliness and grace,
A great love burning brightly in his bosom,
Its wondrous light reflected in his face ;
Within his eyes a Purpose ever glowing,
Within his heart a call from fields afar,
And thronging like a bodyguard about him,
The dreams that only come where angels are.

His young compeers he gathered all around him.
In quiet places, far from crowded ways,
And told in burning words the tale of Calvary,
And filled their minds with thoughts of future days
When lovers of the Cross—of Him Who bore it—
Would walk the world, would travel land and sea,
And spread from Pole to Pole, through all the nations,
The love of Him Who died upon a Tree.

To leave the world and all its ways behind him,
To live apart, in penance and in prayer ;
To tell and teach the Lessons of the Passion,
In silent strength the Cross to bravely bear—
This was his dream ; and on its verge a vision
Of straying souls in lands beyond the foam ;
And then the wish to find them for the Shepherd,
To heal their wounds, and lead them safely Home.

One day a voice came floating on the breezes,
From whence he could not tell, but it was sweet ;
It whispered—" Go to Monte Argentaro! "—
And thus he found his long-desired retreat.
That silent hill above the placid waters
Was meant for hermit, in the Maker's plan,
And here did Paul upraise the saving standard,
And here his holy work for God began.

In obloquy, in suffering and in sorrow
That work went on, till others shared his toil,
Till forth each day from Monte Argentaro
Went willing hands to till the virgin soil.
And when the Lord said : " Rest, thy day is ended,"
His sons went forth to triumph in his name ;
The little, dreamy town of far Ovada
Had won, through him, a never-dying fame.

. . . . . .

When our dear land, emerging from the mourning
That came with day of famine and of gloom,
Was struggling once again into the sunshine,
From out the awful darkness of the tomb,
The sons of Paul came o'er the seas to Eirinn,
And where Mount Argus looks upon the plain,
They made their home, and raised the Cross of Calvary,
Beneath its shade to succour souls in pain.

God bless the work! God bless the tireless toilers!
May His strong Hand uphold them in the storm,
And set, each day, their souls aflame with fervour,
To keep the olden Faith for ever warm ;
To toil like him of Monte Argentaro,
Through darksome days, in suffering and in loss,
And win for wandering souls a peace eternal,
Within the holy shadow of the Cross!

BRIAN O'HIGGINS.

WON BY LOVE.

By LOUISE M. STACPOOLE KENNY.

". . . . And thus the prize
Is won by love at last."

CHAPTER I.

"HE'S your spoiled boy, Mrs. Killourie, and no mistake," said Father Daly to the Widow Killourie.

He was standing at the gate leading into the churchyard, and he had a collecting plate in one hand, with the other he warmly grasped the widow's. He was endeavouring to persuade the congregation to contribute pennies and halfpennies towards the support of the parish clerk.

Kate Killourie had shyly given a brand new threepenny bit, and her only son, John Dan, had more boldly deposited a beautiful shining new penny.

He was invariably called John Dan, because the Killouries are not versatile in their choice of names. For generations the only Christian names among them have been Michael, Patrick, John, Daniel and James, and it had, therefore, become necessary to call the younger members of the clan by two names to distinguish them from each other.

John Dan was a bright-eyed, pleasant-faced lad of about ten. A quantity of curly red-brown hair tumbled over his broad forehead, and sometimes got inextricably mixed with his long black eyelashes. His eyes were very blue and very fearless, and they smiled into the priest's austere countenance with frank confidence. Father Michael Daly was not as stern as he wished to appear. He was a wiry little man with a shock of red hair, a rather sickly pallor overspread his homely face, he was loosely built with large hands and feet, and not an ounce of superfluous flesh. He looked austere and ascetic, but the kindly glow in his deep-set blue eyes, revealed the fact that he was really stern only to himself, and that the ardour of his soul triumphed over the fragility of the body.

"Yes, you spoil him, spoil him sadly, Mrs. Killourie," he repeated. His voice was a trifle rasping, and his accent rough, but his smile was sunny, and the words, though intended to reprove, held an undertone of cordial geniality.

Kate Killourie blushed, her eyes grew hazy as she looked at her boy. "He's my only one, Father," she replied, half apologetically, "and, maybe, I *do* spoil him——"

She lifted her eyes to the priest's face and, reading the sympathy and kindness hidden under the assumed sternness, she added: "Sure love never spoils anyone, Father. I love him dearly, and I wouldn't have nought come nigh to trouble him. He's very young, and he'll have plenty to cross and worry him before he joins his father—God have mercy on poor Dan John's soul, and "—she crossed herself with much fervour—" and I would not like to make things harder for John Dan by being down on and scolding him when he's only a goshoon."

"Perhaps you are right my child," said Father Mick Daly, thoughtfully. Suddenly his brow cleared, and he smiled one of his rare, delightful smiles. "You are right," he asserted with conviction. Love never spoils anyone."

Mrs. Killourie and her boy walked slowly up the grass-bordered, tree-shaded path that led to the church. Kate was a somewhat emotional woman, and the dim lamp burning in the shadows of the chancel, the faint smell of incense mingling with the perfume of St. Joseph's lilies and red and white roses on the altar appealed strongly to her devotional senses. She knelt down in the narrow little

pew that had belonged to the Killouries, father and son, for many generations. No words came to her lips or to her mind, but half mechanically she took out her rosary and lovingly fingered the beads.

" Hail, Mary," she murmured, scarce conscious of what she said. Presently Father Daly came out and vested and proceeded to the altar.

" I will go to the altar of God," he said, and the server answered : " To God who gives joy to my youth."

The congregation were on their knees with bent heads, praying silently, only the priest's voice and the voice of the server broke the silence.

It was borne in upon Kate Killourie as she fingered her beads and offered up voiceless supplications to the Son of God and to His Holy Mother, that never before had she realised the ineffable beauty and unspeakable holiness of the Mass. She fancied she could hear the angels sing.

" Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good will." Yes, it was true when the little bell rang for the Elevation, the God of heaven and earth was offered up. Soon He would come to her—to her a poor humble widow. He would come and He would grant her prayer—" Ask, and you shall receive "—she would ask, she would pray with all the fervour of her loving mother's heart to the Son of the Mother of Divine Love to protect her boy, and if it might be His Holy Will that one day that wild mischievous high-spirited lad might become meek and gentle and holy, and stand before the altar a priest of the Most High God, and as such lift up his hands to receive blessing from the Divine Saviour, and then turn and bless the congregation.

The vision awed and dazzled, but in some strong unaccountable way it became real to her. Yes, it would be so. John Dan would become a priest, a soggarth aroon—the rosary of her tears would gain her this supreme happiness.

" Domine non sum dignus," said the priest, the little bell tinkled, Kate Killourie rose from her knees, and turned to her boy, " Let us go to the rails together, asthore," she whispered.

John Dan looked at her for a moment with a mischievous twinkle in his blue eyes. " Sure, I can't go with you, mamma."

" Why? " she breathed.

" Didn't I rob old Dennis Flaherty's orchard last night, and made myself sick eating apples."

The warm glow died from Kate's face, tears filled her eyes. She gave her son one glance of mingled sorrow and hopelessness, then she went slowly towards the altar, but as the Priest placed the Particle upon her tongue, her sadness vanished and her soul framed a prayer—

" Sure, I know You are good. Oh, my God and my Saviour, and I know in Your own good time You will lead him to Yourself."

CHAPTER II.

Two years passed, swiftly for John Dan, slowly for his mother.

She worked strenuously, toiling and moiling, saving, sparing—on herself only, be it understood. Her spoiled boy never lacked wholesome food and comfortable raiment. She worked in the hope of making enough money to send John Dan to the Diocesan College, and later on to Maynooth College.

The glorious vision that had dazzled her soul at Holy Mass was ever with her—she prayed day and night that it might become a reality, and she did her utmost to win heaven's help by helping herself.

Her courage never failed, though John Dan was a constant source of anxiety to her. He was not a bad boy—far from it—he was only a hig-spirited madcap, full of the joy of life, brimming over with vitality, and ever ready for mischief.

Father Daly shook his head and groaned when Mr. David Fleming, the schoolmaster, reported a very heinous offence in addition to the usual tale of habitual inattention, frequent absences, and general idleness.

" I will have to expel him," announced Mr. Fleming, with quite unnecessary vehemence, frowning over his pince-nez. " He's wild and he's spoiled, and he's a bad egg and no mistake."

" His mother spoils him," sighed the priest, " Yes, he's wild, Mr. Fleming, and a great trial to you, I know, I know, but he is not a bad egg. God bless you, man, who knows and who understands boys if not a poor soggarth who has spent all his life among the people like Father O'Flynn.

" ' Checking the crazy ones,
Coaxing onaisy ones,
Liftin' the lazy ones on with the stick.' "

" You should speak to his mother and explain to her the absolute necessity——"

Father Daly interrupted the schoolmaster with extended hands, and a comical grimace, " Explain to her, is it? Faith, she understands that boy better than the two of us—wise as we are."

His deep-set blue eyes twinkled, but he grew serious when he noticed Mr. Fleming's solemn face.

" I'll pay her a call," he said, consulting his watch, " I have an hour to spare. I won't be any time cycling to Meadowsweet Cottage, and I can have a good palaver with poor Kate."

Someone was before him at Meadowsweet Cottage, one of the tribe of busybodies, who, like magpies, are ever on the watch for spicy bits, vainglorіously pruning their feathers as their sharp beaks bite into and destroy splendid material.

The particular member of the tribe, seated opposite Kate Killourie in the little parlour was a thin wisp of a woman. She was decidedly genteel from the glace kid toe of her brown Oxford shoe to the erect white osprey placed at one side of a black tulle toque. She spoke in a mincing voice, and she pronounced each word slowly and distinctly.

" Yes, dear Mrs. Killourie," she was saying, " it is very lamentable, and I regret to be the bearer of very bad news, but I felt it to be my duty to tell you——" she hesitated and laid a tightly-gloved hand on the widow's arm.

Kate Killourie motioned her to go on, and gently pushed the hand aside.

" Mr. Fleming himself told me that John Dan actually struck him—struck a schoolmaster. Why its almost as wicked as striking a priest."

Her voice and her uplifted hands and eyes expressed unbounded horror. Kate Killourie grew ashen grey. " John Dan struck the schoolmaster," she gasped, and then put her hand to her heart to still its tumultous beating. " Oh, it can't be true, it's not true," she moaned in sore distress.

At that moment Father Michael Daly stepped in at the half-open front door, passed through the kitchen and entered the parlour.

Kate Killourie turned imploring agonised eyes towards him. " It's not true ; oh, Father, asthore say it's not true. John Dan did not strike the schoolmaster."

As she spoke, the offender himself sprang through the open window, nearly knocking Miss Drew off her chair.

She rose and drawing her tight-fitting atrociously cut casement cloth skirts away from him as though she feared contamination, sniffed audibly.

" It's absolutely true, mamma," said John Dan in his clear young voice, and he looked fearlessly into her sad eyes.

" Oh, wisha! wisha! " she moaned.

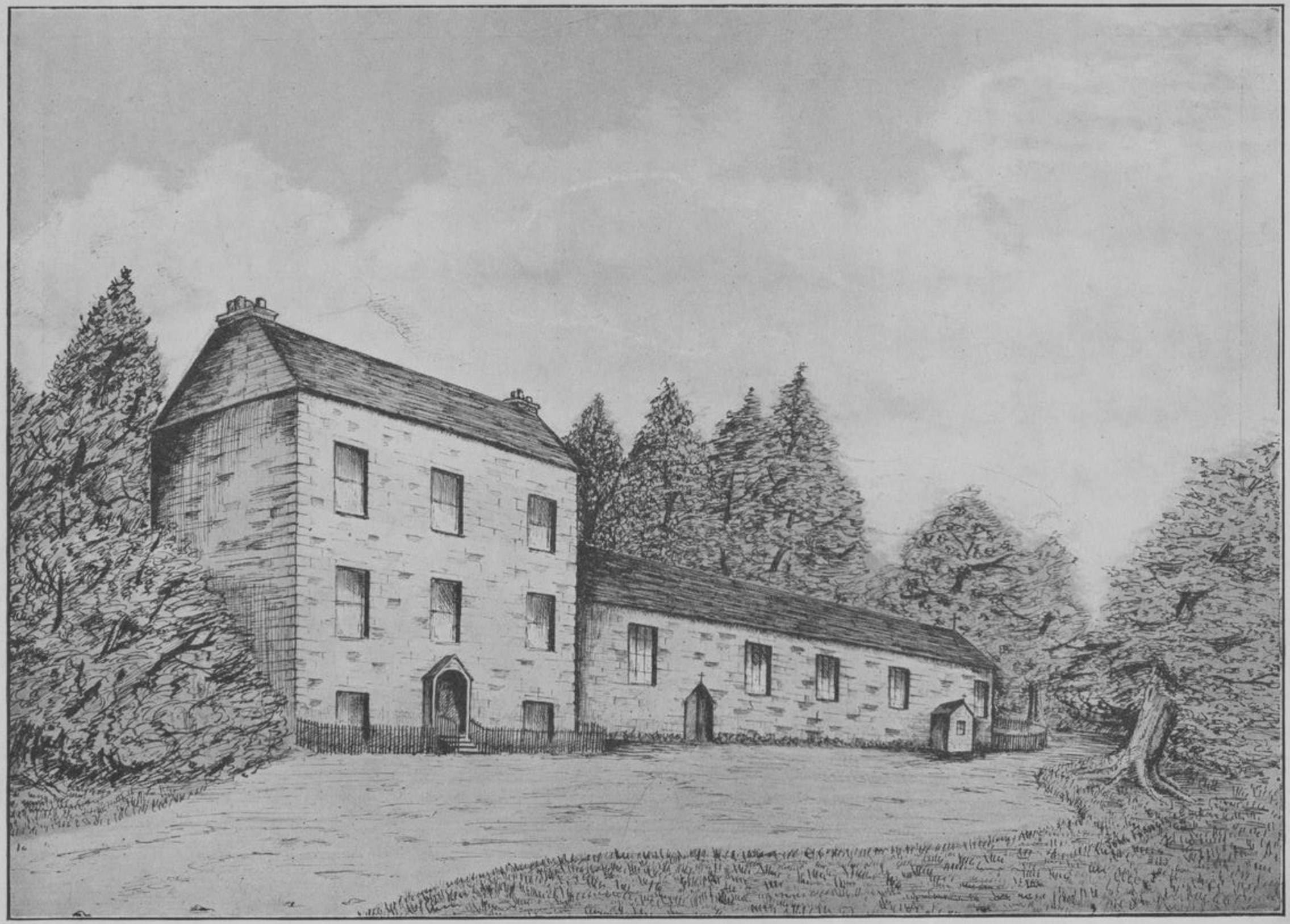
" Why did you do it? " enquired Father Daly, a trifle curtly.

The boy flushed and his eyes flashed.

" He—old Fleming—said I told a lie and I didn't, it's God's truth, I did not ; and when I said I did not he kicked me and called me an infernal liar, and I lost my temper and hit out——"

SCALA SANTA.

(Holy Staircase in charge of Passionist Fathers in Rome).



ORIGINAL HOUSE AND FIRST CHURCH, MOUNT ARGUS.

"You should not have done so," interrupted Father Daly with portentous solemnity. "It was very wicked, John Dan, you should treat with deference and respect those who are in authority over you."

In spite of his assumed severity, Father Mick could not keep a suspicious glint out of his deep-set eyes, and his sensitive lips twitched nervously.

"God forgive me," he was saying to himself, "I fear I would have done the same at his age if anyone—even my schoolmaster—had called me a liar and kicked me. The poor lad. God help us all. What would the best of us be without His grace?"

"He is not a bit sorry, the naughty wretch," commented Fancy Drew.

The priest turned to her. "I think, Miss Drew," he said with icy politeness, "you and I had better leave mother and son together."

Miss Drew sniffed and tossed her head. She was about to make a spiteful remark when Father Mick, divining her intention, sans ceremony, bundled her out of the room.

"Two is company," he observed with a twinkle, and in order that she should not return walked with her to her own door, and left her seated in a wicker chair, hot, breathless, and furiously fanning herself.

Then he returned to Meadowsweet Cottage.

Kate Killourie was lying back in an old-fashioned leather-covered armchair. She looked white and haggard, and the big, black lines round her eyes looked bigger and blacker in contrast with her ashen face.

John Dan knelt beside her. "Oh, mother, darling," he was whispering in a choked voice. "I am sorry, I did not think it would break your heart. I am a wicked good-for-nothing amadhaun, that's what I am, but I would not hurt you for all the world, and I'll do anything you like——"

His voice broke in his throat, and he buried his face in his mother's lap.

"My darling, my own dearest boy," she murmured, gently stroking his curly hair. "You are my joy, my blessing, but, oh, John Dan, asthore, wouldn't you try and learn a little, and be more docile like to your teacher?"

John Dan rose to his feet. "Old Fleming says he won't learn me any more," he said gloomily.

"Whisha, whisha! and is that so?" moaned Kate.

"I fear it is," said Father Daly, coming out of the shadows, where he had stood a deeply interested spectator. "I fear Mr. Fleming will not allow John Dan to go to the school, but if you like, Kate, my child, I will take him in hand myself, and——"

He was interrupted by the widow, who, springing to her feet, knelt before him, kissing his hands—he quickly withdrew them—and giving expression to whole-hearted gratitude and delight.

"Well, well!" smiled the priest, gently raising her, and taking both her hands he held them in a cordial grasp. "Thanks be to God I can do something for the widow and the orphan, though I can't help much with money. I know well the darling wish of your heart, my child, and I can help towards its fulfilment with such poor brains as God has blessed me with. There, now, Kate, he'll be a credit to both of us some day. Wait and see, eh! John Dan, you'll turn over a new leaf and give your mind to study—and one day——" He smiled enigmatically, consulted his watch, and remarked breezily: "I must be off. Come to the presbytery at ten sharp, to-morrow, John Dan, and we'll start you on the royal road. Good-bye and God bless you my children."

CHAPTER III.

It was Christmas morning, and in the grey old church the Holy Sacrifice was being offered up.

The celebrant was a tall, broad-shouldered young man, and as he turned towards the people his bright blue eyes were as those of an angel, pure and holy and seraphic, and his

thin intellectual face shone with the joy that is not of earth but of heaven.

Kate Killourie knelt in her pew, her tired, worn features transfigured, the iridescence of intense happiness shining in her glowing eyes, wreathing her slightly parted lips.

" Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will."

Shyly, reverently, for one brief moment of pure joy, her glad eyes met the priest's serene glance. " Oh, thank God, I thank you my Lord and my Redeemer," the voice of her soul cried to her Creator, " I thank you and Holy Mary with all my heart and soul and strength for You have heard my prayer. Love has won."

Yes, Love *had* won. The high-spirited fearless lad's heart had been touched by Father Daly's kindness and forbearance. Full of gratitude and penitence, he had turned over a new leaf—several new leaves—because being a very human boy, he had relapsed and indulged in fits of idleness and mischief ; however, they did not last long, and each new leaf was more quickly and energetically turned.

John Dan had plenty of grit, and he was certainly not deficient in brains ; also, and best of all, he had a warm, loving heart, and a loyal, generous spirit. When he realised the pain his wild pranks caused his mother, he did his utmost to conquer his reckless dare-devil humour, and by dint of unremitting and ceaseless effort he finally succeeded.

An errant ray of sunshine fell upon his ruddy head as he came down from the altar, it fell upon his mother's sable-silvered hair as she knelt at the rails.

A great gladness filled their hearts, he, her darling son, was about to give her the Holy Eucharist, they were sharing together the Sacred Mystery, and he—ah! what love and gratitude filled his soul as he laid the Sacred Particle upon the tongue of the mother to whose toil and prayers he owed the inestimable grace of his vocation.

. . . . . .

Later on in the bleak yard where the bare branches of the leafless trees writhed and twisted in the wind, and the wild note of curlew and seagull pierced through and dominated the ringing of the joy bells, friends and neighbours gathered round Kate Killourie, congratulating her on her great happiness.

" 'Deed, sure, it's yourself is the proud mother, Kate Killourie, this blessed Christmas morning, to receive the Divine Infant from the hands of your own son," cried a white-capped old woman, shaking her warmly by the hand.

" Faith I knew John Dan had the good heart even when he robbed my orchard," asserted Mrs. Dennis Flaherty.

Fancy Drew passed by, her head high, her impertinent nose sniffing. She glanced disdainfully at the group, then her love of gossip proving stronger than her affectation of superiority, she held out a tightly gloved hand and murmured platitudes.

" Here he comes. Here's himself, God bless him," cried a chorus of hearty voices, " Isn't he a real Soggarth Aroon."

" Loved and brave to you,
Soggarth Aroon,
Yet be no slave to you,
Soggarth Aroon.
Nor out of fear to you,
Och out of love to you,
Soggarth Aroon."

It was Father Michael Daly who recited the famous lines. He had come up unperceived. He was on his way to the Presbytery to the church in order to offer Mass, but the people were so engrossed in the young Soggarth they had failed to notice the approach of the old Pastor.

" Faith, its yourself is our own old ' Soggarth Aroon,' " vociferated Mr. Dennis Flaherty, fearing Father Daly might feel slighted.

The priest smiled, a trifle sadly ; then he shook John Dan's hands and pressed them. His deep-set eyes were hazy and his sensitive

mouth tremulous ; the strength of his emotions deprived him of speech.

Father John Dan smiled into the kind, worn face, " I owe everything to you and to her," he said simply.

Kate Killourie gave a little low cry of unspeakable happiness, she, too, smiled into Father Mick's glowing countenance ; then she cried with a glad note of triumph in her soft voice : " He's my spoiled boy now, Father, agra. Wasn't I right? Didn't I tell you love spoils no one? "

" You were right, Kate, my child," answered Father Daly, gravely, then he raised his head and spoke slowly and impressively.

" My little children, let us love not in words, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth. Let us love one another, for charity is of God, and everyone that is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

MOUNT ARGUS—ITS FIRST GREAT SORROW.

BY THE LATE JOHN CASHEL HOEY.

THE Honourable Captain Charles Reginald Pakenham was one of the most promising officers in the Guards. Amid that gay, glittering London world, with all its splendours, and dissipations, and temptations, he had kept the " whiteness of his soul," and was beloved with a certain gentle awe by all who knew him, for the rare angelic amiability and purity of his nature. His uncle, the Duke of Wellington, even evinced a degree of affection for him, which he was slow to show to his other relatives—for the old Marshal had his instinct of the true and staunch heroic metal that was in him. When the Queen came over to Ireland in 1849—" all clinquant, all in gold," in the splendid scarlet of the Household Troops, and the rich aiguilettes of the royal staff, he came in her train as one of her Majesty's aides-de-camp—and all the house of Longford, from the Earl to the Dean, welcomed their kinsman to his native city—welcomed the Honourable Captain Charles Reginald Pakenham, of her Majesty's Coldstream Guards—since known in this world and the next, as the Very Reverend Father Paul Mary of St. Michael, the Passionist, buried before the altar of his Order, at Mount Argus. As he lay there, the most impressive image of the holiness of death that human eyes could behold—his face full of a happy radiance long after life had ceased—his limbs decently and gracefully composed, as though angels had laid him at rest—lying there with the crucifix clasped in his hands, in the long black robe of his order —its stern spirit of mortification even in death itself displayed in the rough plank bier, the bare feet, and the pillow of bricks—the most irreverent must have felt as in the presence of one already beatified. Visible there were the fine fingers, and arched instep, the delicate transparent skin, and chiselled features of his high patrician blood—there, the stamp of his old soldierly life, almost effaced in a more rigid and militant discipline, whose many marks might be traced in that lithe, mortified figure, and the brave, clear calm of his face ; but over all a halo which was not of this earth, and which filled the grim austerity of the grave with grace, and lifted death into the light of the life beyond—the slow fading of a glorified soul, as of some grand sunset, which, long after it has gone below the horizon, still leaves a glow on the earth and in the air.

None who saw Father Paul Mary will ever forget that most touching spectacle which preached a more inspiring and a more eloquent sermon than the Holy Spirit within him had ever uttered, or than men may read even in the marvellous moral of his life. His, perhaps, was the most miraculous of all the English conversions to the Church. Hardly could the supernatural eye of St. Paul of the Cross himself, whose heart implored so fervidly, and foresaw so clearly the conversion of England, through the dew of prophetic ecstasy, have prefigured the singular fact, that both in England and in Ireland his humble Retreats should be, as it were, inaugurated by two such extraordinary conversions out of that race of nobles who have been, for three centuries, the most powerful enemies of the Church in the world, as Father Ignatius Spencer, and Father Paul Pakenham. Upon Father Paul Mary, grace seems to have fallen like the flash which smote the Apostle at Damascus, and in the yet unabated glow of his first fervour gave up the ghost. When Doctor Newman, Father Faber, Provost Manning, and the long series of clerical and lay converts who were influenced by their teaching, entered the Church, it was by slow degrees, after long delays, with tendencies which gradually developed, and with predispositions manifestly determined. Their conversion had been prayed for in the Catholic, and predicted as a certain catastrophe in the Protestant Church. Dr. Pusey, as it was said, had constituted himself the sign-post from Oxford to Rome, and many looked down the road, and saw there shining beyond sandy tract and darksome marsh the fair turrets of the City of God. In the wonderful and happy ways of Providence, it was ordered that many of the most remarkable of them, clerics and laymen, should either enter the Church, or receive the earlier and moulding graces of the Catholic character from one of Saint Paul's bare-footed Clerks of the Most Holy Cross and Passion. The holy Father Dominic, of that Order, received, in one day, Doctor Newman, Father Dalgairns, and the whole community of Littlemore into the Church. And the influence which that great Passionist had upon the two most conspicuous lay champions of the Church in England, Frederick Lucas and Ambrose Lisle Phillips—men otherwise so totally different in character, and in the order of their works—God only knows. Charles Pakenham, it is said, was converted by reading a volume of the writer, whom, above all others, Protestants abhor with a horror far beyond that which is lavished in such happy ignorance on poor old Peter Dens —the little volume called "The Spirit of Saint Alphonsus Liguori." And reading therein, in his Hounslow quarters, he is said to have got some glimpses of a higher truth than had yet dawned upon his soul, but coming through such apparent incongruities and superstitious vulgarities as an enlightened young officer in her Majesty's Coldstream Guards could hardly be expected to comprehend. He determined, however, to trace this gleam divine, though it did apparently shine like the spark that led Sinbad out of the cave, through dead men's bones, to the clear day. A Puseyite Minister, whom he asked for light, could not penetrate the mystic meaning of these passages—thought, perhaps, they were part of the non-essential mummeries of Popery, without which the religion would be on the whole rather respectable and graceful. Charles Pakenham went straightway to Cardinal Wiseman, determined to search out the truth and the whole truth, manifest or mystery as it might be. The end was a fitting reward for such absolute simplicity and purity of intention. He became a Catholic almost immediately ; and soon after (this was in the year 1851) being near the Passionist Retreat in Worcestershire, he felt the call to Orders. For the last two days of Lent, prostrate before the altar of that community, which commemorates in every act of its discipline and every word of its preaching the Passion of Christ and Him Crucified, the neophyte prayed that his call might be made clear, and his grace sufficing. Father Vincent, the Superior of the

House, earnestly endeavoured to dissuade him. He naturally feared lest the austerities of the Passionists should be intolerable to one so delicately nurtured, and of a frame already fragile—the cutting discipline, the broken sleep, the severe fast, the stern vow of life-long poverty, and the rough routine of the humblest of all the Church's ministries. Why not the subtle and chivalrous Order of Loyola for a noble and a soldier—or the simple and genial rule of Saint Vincent—or the gentle, liberal air, half ascetic, half poetic of dear old Saint Philip's Oratory? But the young soldier had embraced the Church and the Cross with all his soul and all his body—to leave the world and the world's ways at once and altogether—to bury every trace of the old Adam, and arise renewed and regenerated : a noble, a soldier of the Court, a man of fashion—therefore, the chosen Priest of the meanest of the vulgar, and the most squalid of the poor : one who had lived a life of inherited opulence, of customary luxury, in an atmosphere closed against privation or pain, and lit with genius, and passion, and wit—therefore, hunger, and thirst, and broken rest, and the voluntary lash, and the bare foot, and the shaven crown, and the contempt and cbloquy of all the world. He deserved to have and he had his will. The Passionists at last consented to receive him. On Easter Monday he returned to London, sold his commission, and all his other property—divided the money among asylums for widows, orphans, and female penitents—then returned without a penny in his pocket to Broadway, and was recevied as a novice of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, under the invocation of St. Michael, the Archangel. The old Duke is said to have been the only one of his relations who could comprehend this most singular step. He hoped Charles would go through with the regular discipline, as he had undertaken it, and went to see him in his cell—finding him as everyone else did who went thither—not the fiery fanatic you might imagine, but more gentle, and genial, and graceful in all his ways than he used to be in the drawing-rooms of St. James.

And so he lived the life of a long, slow agony of all that was mortal in him—" knowing for certain that he must lead a dying life," as it is said in the " Imitation of Christ," Whom he imitated in all things and even unto the end, loving and living among the vulgar and the lowly poor, and mortifying even the natural grace and flow of his rich intellect, that he might speak to them in the plainest and humblest words the great living lesson of God's Cross. He had one external reward only—priceless to one of his perfect humility. Fame utterly shunned him. Until almost immediately before his death, the world had not heard of the sacrifices he had made, of the sanctity of his nature, of the great hope in which he was held. Then as death drew nigh, even in the eyes of men, the crown descended and the glory grew about his head. The last was made first—the novice became the Rector and the Founder—and a certain mild sovereignity and unworldly attraction diffused itself over all who saw him. When death struck him in a day, like a revelation, his name and his virtues became familiar to the whole city—and of all the thousands and thousands who gazed on the shell of a soul so holy, there was not one who did not seem to feel that a Saint had gone home to the House of God.

IN THE NOON OF NIGHT.

By ELEANOR F. KELLY.

MRS. DELAFELD had recently come into possession of Lydmore Castle through the death of a relation with whom she had been a favourite, and as she surveyed her new inheritance on this December morning a look of satisfaction overspread her countenance. "Yes," she thought, "Lydmore Castle, with its antique turrets and spacious rooms and beautiful grounds was something to be proud of." The only drawback in her opinion was its situation, for it stood on a promontory of the wild Galway coast, and remoteness and isolation did not at all appeal to Mrs. Delafeld, who was inordinately fond of society. But she resolved to make up for those defects by always having numbers of her friends to stay with her there, and there were multitudes whom she claimed as friends, for she had travelled much and was well-known in many of the capitals of Europe. She had now the intention of having a house-warming at Christmas, and so many guests had been invited.

All the old servants had descended to her with the Castle, but in view of the array of visitors whom she expected she considered that another maid would be necessary and so she now went to her desk to write an advertisement for one. Scarcely had she made it ready for despatch than a servant entered the room with her morning's mail. One of the letters was evidently out of the ordinary, for she re-read it and held it in her hand for a considerable time as if turning over its contents in her mind. It was from her niece, Barbara Blake, a young lady who was a special pet of hers, for she had all her own gay and frivolous disposition. Barbara, it appeared, had become engaged to a gentleman of whom her mother strongly disapproved for he was a non-Catholic and they knew little of his antecedents, of whom he was peculiarly reticent. As Mrs. Blake had set her face against the marriage, Barbara, who was infatuated with Cecil Delamere, whom she had met during a holiday on the Continent, and whom nothing could induce her to give up, had written to ask her aunt if the wedding might take place from Lydmore Castle. The letter was full of Cecil Delamere's praises, and it ended by saying that Barbara herself would arrive from Dublin almost as soon as her letter, to hear her aunt's decision, which she hoped would be favourable.

"The little minx is going to make sure that it is favourable by coming herself to coax me into acquiescence," said she to herself. "Mrs. Blake is certainly narrow where religion is concerned—always was so. I remember how she turned up her eyes in holy horror when I announced my intention of marrying Mr. Delafeld because he was a Freethinker. And yet he was well enough as men go. No doubt there might have been trouble if we had had children—for I should not have liked them to be quite without religion—but, fortunately, there were none. If religion is the only objection to Cecil Delamere, I shall certainly take sides with Barbara and she will be married from here. Why, Anna Blake will have her girls old maids if she is so particular about religion." Her thoughts were interrupted by the noise of wheels coming up the avenue and presently a motor appeared in sight. In it, closely wrapped in furs was a pretty girl in whom Mrs. Delafeld recognised her niece, Barbara Blake. She hastened downstairs and gave her an affectionate greeting which reassured Barbara who, at first, seemed doubtful of a welcome from her aunt.

"Did you get my letter, auntie," she queried when greetings had been exchanged.

"I've just finished reading it," answered her aunt.

"Well?" queried the girl, searching anxiously the elder woman's face.

"Well," said her aunt, "I cannot take it on myself to encourage a girl to disobey her mother without good reason."

"But there *is* good reason, auntie. Cecil is just the very nicest man living. I could never even dream of giving him up."

"I must see for myself what he is like, and so I shall invite him here for Christmas. He will be sure to accept the invitation when he knows that you are here. I shall certainly not object to him because of his being a Protestant, and if he is everything you say he is, then we'll have here the nicest wedding ever."

"Oh, auntie, you're the very best they make," said Barbara, giving her a hearty caress. "And what a lovely setting this picturesque old castle will be for my wedding. It reminds me of the beautiful, fairy castles of my old tale books. I do congratulate you on being its owner, auntie."

"Yes, it is a charming place, though a bit lonely," answered Mrs. Delafeld. "Susan, the housekeeper, will show you all over it if you wish. She has been here for ages and is familiar with every inch of the place. I must give you in charge to her now as I shall be busy for some hours sending out invitations for Christmas."

When Barbara had refreshed herself after her journey she was eager to explore the old castle, and so she spent a considerable time in wandering through its intricate corridors, climbing its quaint stairs, and peering into old-world rooms, many of which looked in the dim December light as if they might have been the scenes of tragedy or romance in days long dead. Her curiosity being satisfied, and her aunt being still busy with her correspondence she went to the housekeeper's room with a view to hearing something of the history of the castle and its departed occupants. Susan was only too delighted to talk about the place, for she had passed nearly all her life there, and to her it was the pivot of the universe. Long she dilated on the great gatherings that used to be there in the olden days, and so graphic were her descriptions of the magnificence of the banquets held there, that Barbara could easily imagine herself seated at table as one of the proud array of guests.

"And I'm sure you have ghosts, too, Susan," said Barbara, when the housekeeper had paused from sheer lack of breath in her tales of past glories. "I had quite an eerie feeling when I was wandering through those dim corridors just now, and some of the rooms looked as if they might be haunted."

"Oh. yes, there is a ghost and it has been seen more than once, too," answered Susan with a very solemn air.

"What is it like—a lady in white?"

"No—a black dog."

"That is a very unusual ghost, Susan. I suppose it has a history. If so, I should be glad to hear it, for I am extremely interested."

"It comes as a warning, Miss, and it's always at midnight that it's seen. The story about it—and it's a true one, Miss—the story is that long ago an heiress of Lydmore Castle married a man who was false to her. He married her for the sake of the castle and estates while all the time he loved another woman, who was no better than she ought to be, much more than his wife. Well, he contrived that this unworthy person should be frequently amongst the guests at the Castle, but his wife had a pet black dog which seemed to have a fierce hatred of her, and whenever he saw her would snarl and bark at her furiously. In fact he seemed to have an idea that she was not a quite proper kind of visitor, for he used to follow her about snarling and barking at her. This annoyed the master and herself extremely, for the dog's barking was always an indication of where she was. So one day the master got so angry that he seized the dog and flung it down with all his force on the stone pavement of the courtyard, where, of course, it was killed instantly. And ever since a little black dog appears at midnight to any lady at the castle whose lover is false. He comes as a warning."

"Strange," said Barbara, thoughtfully. "It would seem as if animals had souls. I believe they have, too, though, of course, not like ours."

"I believe, anyway, they see things that we don't see, Miss. I've often heard tell of that. It's my experience at any rate that if a dog doesn't like a man there's something that isn't quite right about him."

"Well, about your ghostly dog, I don't think there is any likelihood that I shall see him, for my fiancé, Cecil Delamere, is the truest and dearest lover that ever a girl had. I'm sure you'll think so when you see him, Susan. He is coming here for Christmas. I hope you're not one of those old-fashioned people who disapprove of one marrying a man who is not a Catholic."

"Is your fiancé not a Catholic, then, Miss?" queried Susan in a tone which annoyed Barbara, who said :—

"Oh, I never bother about a man's religion. It's really all a matter of what a man thinks is right."

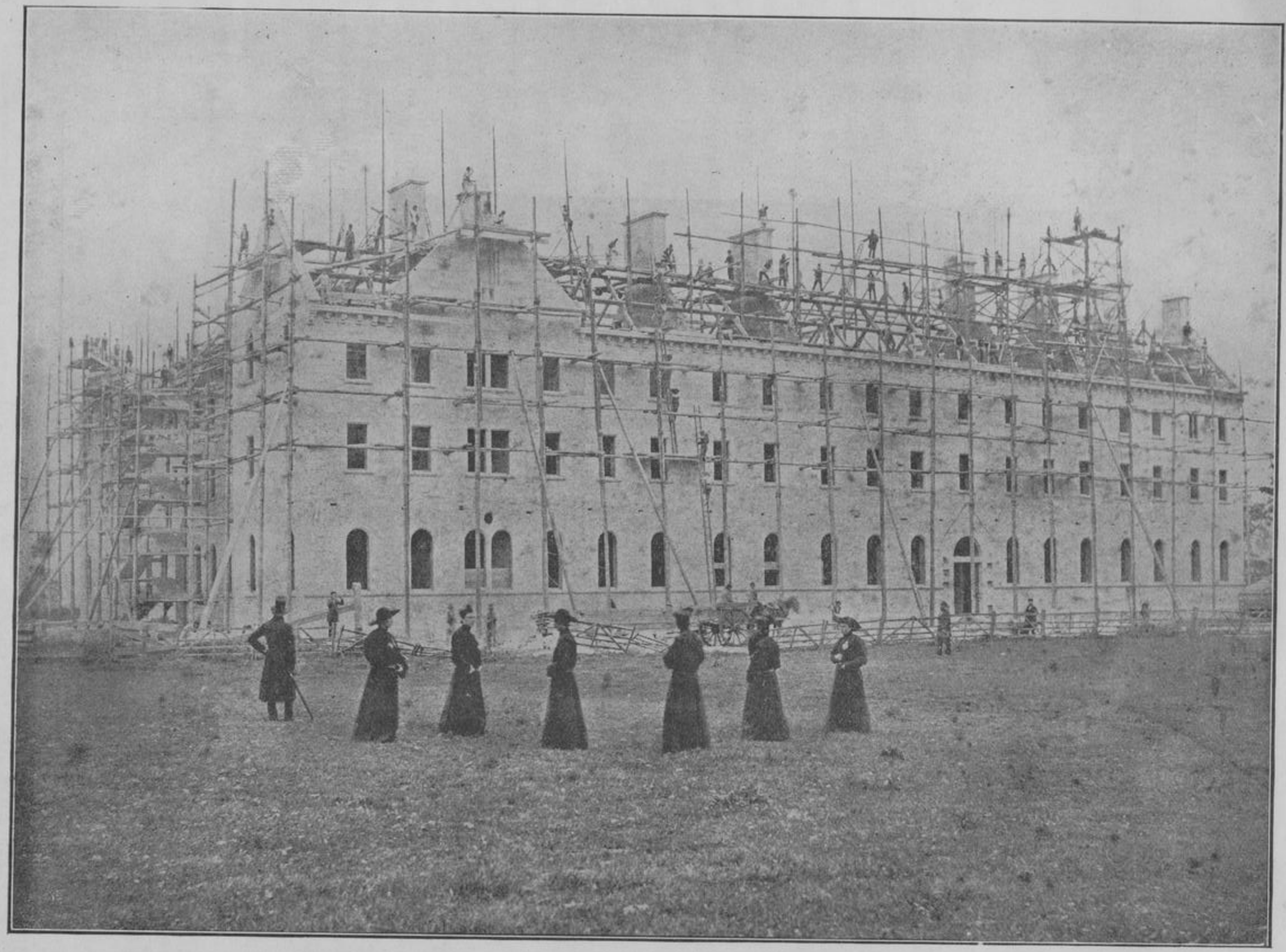
"Oh!" said Susan in a voice so eloquent of disapproval that Barbara felt displeased and made an abrupt departure.

"It would do her good if she saw the ghost," said Susan to herself when the girl had gone, "for I've seen enough to be quite sure that good seldom comes of that sort of marriage."

II.

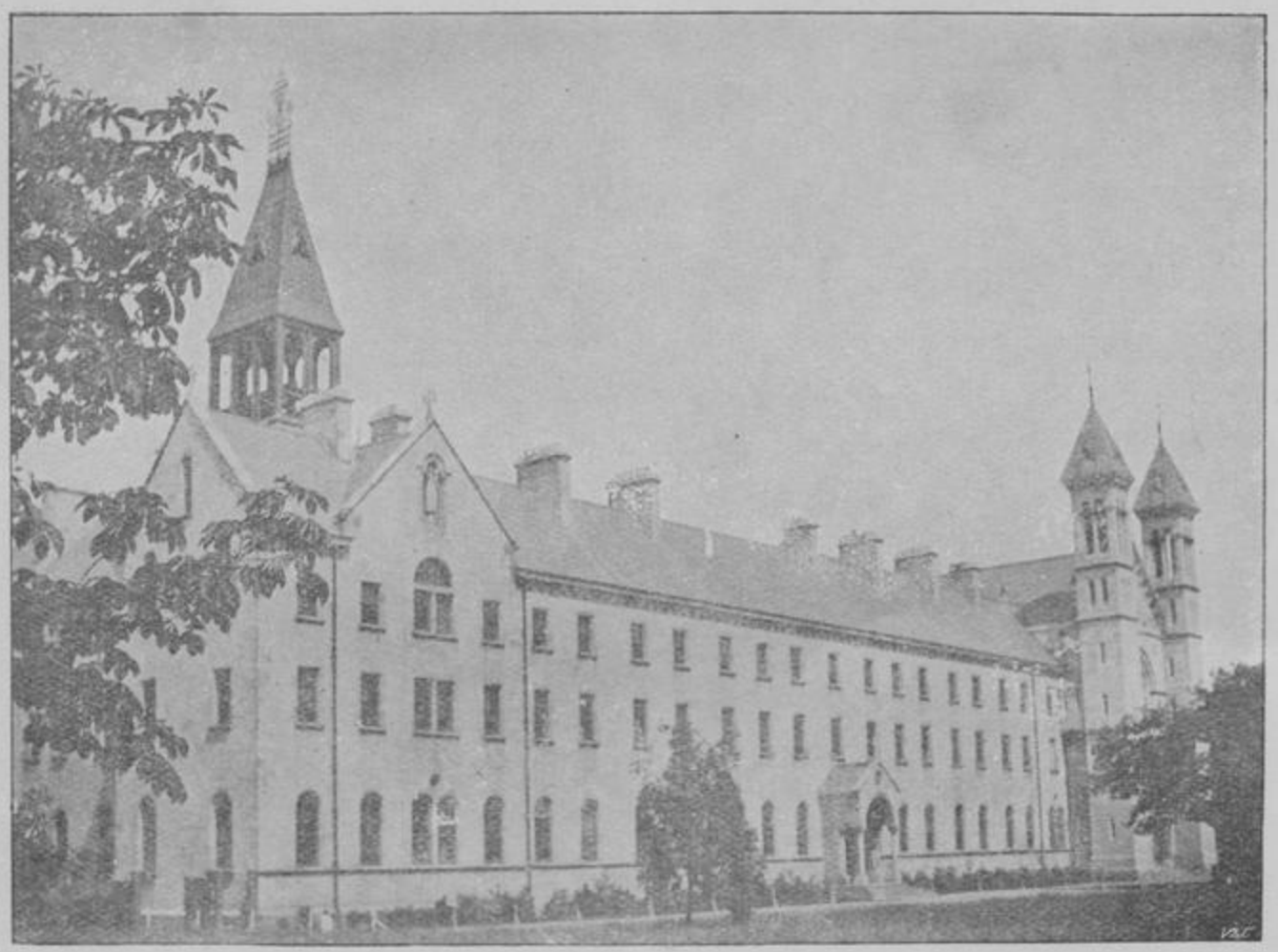
Lavish was the hospitality that Christmas at Lydmore Castle, and many were the guests assembled there to selebrate the joyous Feast, for indifferent as her character was in some respects, Mrs. Delafeld was a perfect hostess, and enjoyed immense popularity accordingly. Few had declined her invitations, and some even of her Continental friends graced the Castle with their presence. Cecil Delamere was amongst the guests, and though his hostess received him with her usual graceful cordiality, she scrutinized him keenly and resolved to know "something" about him before she gave him her approval as a husband for Barbara. His courtly manners and distinguished air aided by the little delicate attentions which he was constantly paying her soon made a favourable impression, and when it reached her ears that he had been heard to say that he admired the aunt almost as much as the niece, her favour was completely won. In addition, one of her guests, a Mrs. Arbuthnot from somewhere in the West End of London, appeared to know him well, and when Mrs. Delafeld approached her to know if she considered him an "eligible" for her niece, her answer was emphatically in the affirmative. This lady gave vague information as to his being the owner of rich, sugar plantations in Sumatra and of mines in Australia, so that, before long, Mrs. Delafeld was actually congratulating Barbara on her conquest. It was arranged that the wedding should take place immediately after Christmas. Barbara was in raptures at her aunt's enthusiastic approval of her choice; beautiful presents began to pour in for her immediately, and all the preliminaries for the wedding were arranged. It was to be in Christmas week, and all the Christmas guests at Lydmore Castle were also to be wedding guests.

The night before the fateful ceremony was to take place, Barbara retired to rest, thinking herself the happiest girl in all the world that all the difficulties in her way had been removed and that the course of true love had been made so smooth. Her room was flooded with silvery moonlight which suited well her dreamy mood, and she did not draw the blinds before turning in. Excitement prevented her from sleeping more than fitfully, and, just as one of the Castle clocks was striking the midnight hour, she woke up from a sleep of short duration. The moon was still peering into her room, and now she felt sorry that she had not drawn the blinds, for it seemed to make everything look ghostly. An eerie feeling took possession of her, and as she lay thus she thought she heard a noise as if her door were pushed softly open. She was now

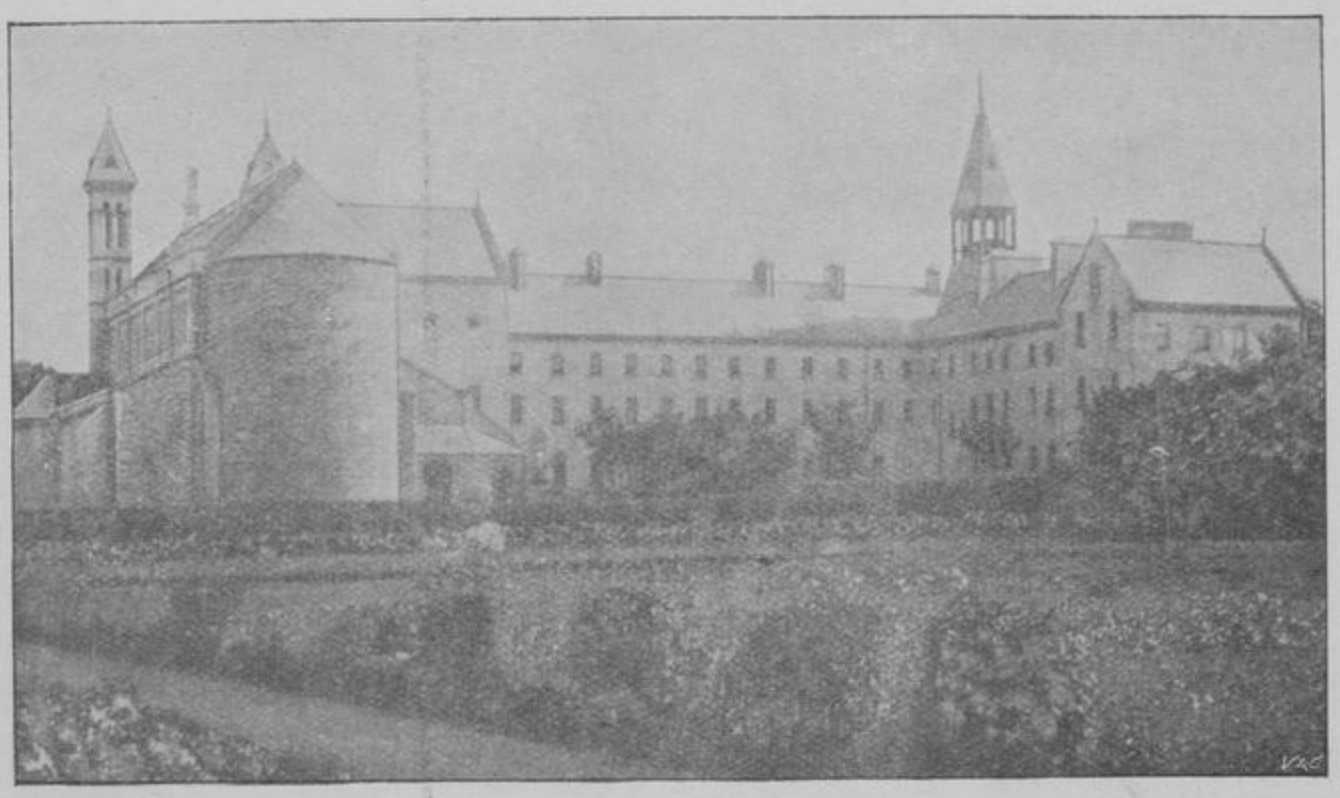


MOUNT ARGUS IN THE MAKING.

MOUNT ARGUS.



PRESENT HOUSE AND CHURCH.



ANOTHER VIEW.

in a state bordering on terror, and scarcely daring to open her eyes, she looked in the direction from which the sound had come. The next moment she screamed in affright, for the moonlight revealed the shape of a black dog coming slowly but surely towards her, with its ghostly eyes fixed on her. Suddenly she remembered Susan's story of the black dog which haunted the Castle, and terror so overcame her that she fainted away.

The lady who occupied the room next to hers had, however, heard her scream ; her aunt was summoned immediately, and soon there was the sound of slippered feet pattering along the corridor. Her room quickly filled with quite a crowd of the lady guests, some merely curious, others sympathetic, while a few of the men stood outside the door, asking questions as to what had happened.

"I feel certain something must have frightened her, her scream sounded exactly like that," said Mrs. Bellwood, the lady who had heard Barbara's cry, to her aunt who was bending over the girl's pallid countenance trying to revive her with smelling salts.

"Perhaps a burglar got into her room," suggested one of the crowd.

"It couldn't have been that or I should have seen him. I came in immediately I heard her cry," answered Mrs. Bellwood.

"Very mysterious," said another.

Then the whisper went round that the Castle had the reputation of being haunted. Whereupon the ladies all huddled together, nor could they afterwards be induced to go to their various rooms without an escort.

Meantime, one of the gentlemen who had been able to gather what had happened took it on himself to go for the doctor, who, fortunately, did not live very far away. When the doctor came and saw Barbara he shook his head gravely.

"The shock must have been very great," said he. "It will be some time before she recovers consciousness and then she must have quite a long rest."

"Then her wedding must be postponed," said her aunt. "It was fixed for to-morrow —or rather to-day."

"Poor girl! How very sad," said the doctor ; "but it cannot take place for the present."

It was hours before Barbara's senses returned, and then, by the doctor's orders, she was asked no questions, but allowed complete rest. However, when she found herself alone with her aunt she told her what had happened.

"And, auntie," she added, "I feel there was 'something' in it. I feel just as if I had been on the brink of an unseen precipice and been warned of my danger."

"Nonsense, child," answered her aunt ; "that story of Susan's got on your brain and you imagined you saw the dog."

Cecil Delamere had gone to Dublin to make some purchases which he required before the wedding, and when he returned early that morning and heard what had happened his distress appeared so deep and genuine that Mrs. Delafeld felt quite sorry for him, so she reassured him by saying that Barbara would be herself again in a day or two. With that he had to content himself, and leaving the Castle he walked down the avenue with a very pre-occupied air. So absorbed was he in his own thoughts that he scarcely noticed a woman whom he met on his way and who was coming towards the Castle. But the moment she saw him she seemed quite startled, and giving him a keen, scrutinizing glance she passed on and made her way into the Castle by the servants' entrance. She had come in answer to Mrs. Delafeld's advertisement for a maid, and not having had time to send on her references she had brought them with her. Hearing that she had come, Mrs. Delafeld summoned her to her own room and bidding her be seated proceeded at once to look through her references. No sooner had she glanced at the very first one she opened than she changed colour and turning to the servant said in a voice which spoke of suppressed amazement :—

"I see you have a reference here from a Mrs. Cecil Delamere. Who is this lady, and is she still living?"

"Yes, mum, she's still alive. She's a divorced lady, mum. Not that it was her fault, mum; her husband led her an awful life—he was like a beast to her, though he was always gallivantin' with the girls. I'm sure it's him I met just now when I was comin' here. I'd know him anywhere."

"But this is terrible!" said Mrs. Delafeld, rising from her seat and staggering under the severity of the shock she had received. She rang for the housekeeper, and when Susan had appeared she gave the girl in charge to her, saying that she might engage her if she found her references satisfactory.

Indifferent as Mrs. Delafeld was in matters of religion, still, the sacred instinct of Irish womanhood was strong within her, and her niece's marriage with a man who had a wife still living was to her absolutely unthinkable. She sought out Mrs. Arbuthnot and reproached her with having recommended as a husband for Barbara a man who had a wife still living, even though she was not now his wife in the eye of the law.

"Oh, but that's nothing," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, not a little astonished at her friend's anger about a matter which she herself would not have regarded as the slightest impediment to matrimony.

"Oh, but it is everything to an Irishwoman, and I hope it always will be," answered Mrs. Delafeld, with considerable warmth.

Without delay she gave Cecil Delamere his dismissal as a suitor for her niece's hand, and when he asked for an interview with Barbara herself she declined to see him for the revelations concerning him had cured her of her infatuation.

"Oh, auntie," said she to Mrs. Delafeld, when that lady had informed her of the skeleton in the Delamere cupboard, "I'm sure it was mother's prayers that saved me from such dishonour, and that that mysterious warning came in answer to them."

A lady who was a guest at the Castle would not have quite agreed that the dog was a ghost for she had a pet, black Pomeranian which had a habit of wandering through the corridors and peering into the various rooms, and she had more than a suspicion that it was he who entered Barbara's room on the night of the apparition, for Barbara had a way of leaving her door slightly ajar, when she retired, "as a precaution," she said, "in case of fire." But in view of the consequences this lady kept her own counsel and also kept her dog closely confined to her own quarters during the remainder of her stay at Lydmore Castle.

Susan, however, stoutly maintains that it was the spectral dog of the Castle that Barbara had seen, and that his coming was a warning to her. Perhaps it was, whether spectral or not.

OUR ADVERTISERS.

It is only fair to our Advertisers to state that, without their co-operation and readiness in placing their advertisements with us, it would be impossible to bring out this Magazine at the modest sum of sixpence. We regard them, one and all, as very practical benefactors.

All the firms whose advertisements appear in *The Cross Annual* are establishments of repute and reliability. We therefore take this welcome opportunity of urging our friends and readers to show their appreciation of this willing and generous help by giving them their custom and recommending them to others as well.

HOME—SWEET OR BITTER MEMORIES?

By the Rev. WILFRID BRODIE, C.P.

IN one of his published sermons, Father Robert Kane, S.J., depicts very beautifully the steadying and encouraging influence of Home Life upon those who are struggling in a hard world. "In our human life," he says, "we all must meet with hardship and trial. But wintry as may be the winds of adversity, bitter as may be the breath of selfish interest that blights our hopes, dreary as may be our own outlook over the world around us, yet, these we can bravely face or bear with patience, if at times, under a roof-tree brightened by the sunshine of kind smiles, gladdened by the warmth of devoted hearts, we can seek shelter from harsh sounds and dismal sights, to rest in our happy home."

These words refer, of course, to the ideal home. Are they applicable to many of the homes of this war-worn age in which we live? Without adopting an unnecessarily pessimistic attitude, we fear the answer is in the negative. By pointing out certain facts which have led us to this conclusion we entertain the hope that by facing such facts the obstacles to real home-life may be removed, or at least lessened.

False ideas regarding the training of children are very evident at the present time. Parents adopt either of the two extremes, a false kindness or a "domestic militarism." On the one hand, children are often made the pampered idols of their silly parents, their every whim is gratified, while the good old Christian method of discipline, by which the young are trained in reverence for parents, obedience and self-control, has become to a great extent a mere memory of bygone times. Mothers do not realise that a childhood in which every whim is gratified and every silly request forestalled is the worst possible training for the battle of life. As a result of this state of things, parental authority is held in such scant respect that instead of rearing a generation of well-mannered, disciplined boys and girls we have a generation of ungoverned, impertinent little autocrats! The over-coddled children, accustomed all their young lives to have their own way, surrender to the first enticing sin that comes along, of whatever nature that sin may be. Looking back on the past few years one sees how juvenile delinquency has increased. The records of lawlessness for the last five or six years bear testimony to the number of thefts and "housebreaking expeditions" performed by mere children, and even to a number of boy murderers! The neglect partially inevitable during war-time may be responsible for some of these appalling facts, but are we justified in blaming the war for everything? Domestic discipline was allowed to lapse for a while during the years of carnage, but surely sufficient time has elapsed since then to restore home life to its normal state. Yet, what is, as a matter of fact, the case to-day? No adjustment has been attempted, and the formation of a so-called home-life based on the principle of "do as you please" still continues. Parents adopt a short-sighted attitude towards their children, giving them little or no real, practical training which will stand the test of life's trials. They foolishly image that a "sloppy" sentimentality will prepare the young for the blows of a hard world.

On the other hand, there are parents who are advocates of a "domestic militarism." While they themselves are apostles of "long-faced" Christianity, they expect their children to have the same melancholy outlook on life. They seek to capsize every innocent pleasure, to frown upon joviality, and by their Pharisaical rigourism and bigoted lob-sidedness strive to instil into the minds of their children

the peculiar doctrine that a sour face is one of the necessary passports to Paradise! They complain that outside of school-hours, their children take too much interest in football, tennis, or some other healthy pastime, while, if the young dance at all, they are supposed to be jazzing to perdition! It is a pity that parents do not realise that any over-strain and excessive rigourism in the training of youth will, in time, produce a reaction. The pendulum will, sooner or later, swing too much the other way, and then will come moral chaos. If the home-life of the child lacks the essential principle of love, then when the young come to an age at which they can act and think for themselves, it is the most natural thing in the world that they will have had so much rigourism and domestic tyranny that they will, so to speak, determine to " make up for lost time " and, casting aside all restraint, plunge headlong into a lawless state of self-gratification.

Besides the correct training of children, parents have the serious obligation of giving good Christian example if home-life is to be what it should be—a place of happiness and love. All the verbal instruction in the world will avail nothing without the guidance of good example. " We must practise before we preach. All the preaching that ever yet was spoken never convinced a single man, never converted a single soul, never made one Christian, unless the man who spoke was a living illustrator of the word."

When boyhood or girlhood is past, the young man or the young woman remembers not so much what father or mother told them to do, but rather what they actually *did* in their ordinary daily lives. While parents are forever crossing swords over a hundred and one matters, while the father is forever finding fault with his wife, or the wife is continually " nagging " at her husband, how can children look upon home-life with respect and love? Where such circumstances prevail one may despair of harmony and peace. One might as well hope for good music from an orchestra managed by two conductors! If parents are not thrifty, clean, upright and honest, how can their children learn these qualities? It is still true that " the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." The formation of character and the welfare of a nation depend much upon a healthy, disciplined home-life of love.

Besides these internal obstacles to true home-life there are certain external hindrances. An untold amount of harm, spiritual and temporal is wrought by parents who are indifferent as to the character of the associates of their children. In all innocence the young sometimes form friendships with certain persons whose companionship is wholly undesirable. Nevertheless, their parents do not seem to care. If, in the course of time, the " evil communications " should do even more than to " corrupt good manners," at whose door is the blame chiefly to be laid? To all those to whom God has entrusted the care of children He has likewise given the privilege and obligation of rearing them in His love and service. Carelessness in removing any obstacle in this matter on the part of those in charge of youth is certainly a sin especially displeasing to Christ, " the children's Friend." Notwithstanding these facts, children are frequently allowed to wander at will, to make what acquaintances chance may send them, and this no unfrequently at hours when they should be assembled in the home-circle. Whither are we drifting? Is true home-life to become nothing more than an old-fashioned relic of less " enlightened " ages?

Literature may be styled, in a sense, a companion. Many an hour of leisure is spent in reading when one does not feel inclined for the society of others. Hence, literature may be classed amongst one's "associates." Here again parents are often unscrupulously indifferent as to what their children read. Worse still, they sometimes set the pernicious example of buying and perusing some of the vile publications which flood the markets to-day. Many minds have become so depraved nowadays that the only kind of literature

considered worth while reading is of that type comprising newspapers which gloat over divorce cases and other immoral proceedings, and novels in which degrading plots are thinly veiled in popular and pleasing language wherein the suggestiveness and double-meaning phraseology are presented with a strange subtlety, and which advocate the doctrine that love means licence, marriage a mockery and faith in the supernatural a time-worn superstition.

It is undoubtedly true to say that were there no demand for such literature there could be no supply. If one walks through the streets of Catholic cities and glances into the windows of certain book-shops one is confronted with plenty of this filth. It is not merely for the purpose of window-dressing that such publications are on view! If the managers of such shops knew that such literature would not get a sale would the supply be continued? Is public opinion on this matter dead? We hear of certain boycotts for national, political and other reasons, but we have not yet heard of any widespread boycott, even in Catholic cities, of shops which trade in immoral literature. In Ireland there was a movement on foot for this purpose. For a while it gained the support of a few. The organisation still exists and works, but it works almost so unaided that its supporters are even fewer than formerly and one would imagine that at present the chief boycott was directed against that organisation itself!

Time and again the Catholics of Ireland have been warned against the evil literature which comes to their country from foreign lands. We condemn certain publications *not because they come from elsewhere*, but because of their immoral nature. We welcome good literature from wheresoever it may come. But evil literature we likewise condemn, wherever it be published. If in Protestant England good Catholic newspapers, periodicals and books can find a wide circulation, what is wrong in Ireland that some of our shops have to fall back upon foreign and immoral publications to meet the public demand? Indeed, as regards literature, Ireland cannot turn her eyes to Heaven and say : " I thank Thee, O God, that I am not as the rest," for to do so would be rank hypocrisy. It is at the present day when we are *supposed* to be working out our own national destiny that some of the so-called " intellectual thinkers " of Ireland produce a paper containing not only immoral filth but also articles blatently blasphemous. Suffice it to say that the second number of this periodical was allowed to appear on sale! This fact speaks for itself and needs no further comment. Be it said, however, to the credit of the Dublin printers that everyone of them refused to have anything to do with the paper. But it *was* published elsewhere, and, as we have said, the second number has appeared! We need not go far back to remember the time when national literature in Ireland was suppressed by the then rulers of the land, because it *was* national. And yet, immoral literature is allowed to be sold in Ireland while most of the people say nothing in protest, and seem to care less. " The children of this world are wiser in their generation . . . . . "

In writing so much on this matter we have not diverted from the subject of this article, though it might appear so at first sight. From a reminder of the existence of this evil one can easily conclude what harm it can effect in the family circle. When such literature is read by the young, or even by their elders, is it not tempting Providence to hope that its influence will not become evident before very long : that its false doctrines and ideas will be allowed so to saturate the minds especially of the young that Christian morality and a high-minded regard of life will soon vanish altogether? This is one of the most powerful obstacles to the happiness of the Catholic home.

Home Life! There was a time when everyone could say with truth : " There's no place like home." Even still, those who have not forgotten " Love's Young Dream " and who

strive to make home a place of healthy happiness for the family find by experience that the greatest pleasures of life are to be found in a happy home. But owing to the spread of the obstacles enumerated above, the love of home is quickly decreasing. It is surely time for all to pause and consider, and as a result of such reflection, strive to reinstate the sacredness of home to the place intended by God.

"Back to Home-Life!" should be one of the slogans of Catholics to-day, while everyone should strive to the utmost to make it a place worthy of its sacred name. The model of true home-life, as exemplified in Nazareth, should never be forgotten. That cottage among the hills of Gallilee was a home of labour, a home of poverty, but always a home of love, for it was, for thirty years, the home of Christ. May the homes of Catholics revert more and more to this great model.

Thus will the love of home be undying, and as the years go by one will look back upon it with love and gratitude, and experience the sentiments voiced by Lacordaire when he said: "O Home of my fathers, where, from our earliest years we drew in together with the light of day the love of everything holy! It is in vain we grow old—we return to you with a heart for ever young; and were it not eternity that calls us and removes us from you, nothing could console us for the grief of seeing your shadows lengthen and your sun grow pale."

Mrs. ST. ROPE'S BRIDESMAID.

By JOHN AYSCOUGH.

GOLD'S End, where Mrs. Backus lived, had by that time fallen into the octopus-arms of London, and had possibly not been improved by that embrace. Mr. Polder, who claimed to be the oldest inhabitant, said he minded when it was in the country.

"How was it brought up?" demanded Geeny Backus, on one occasion when she overheard Mr. Polder make this statement to another customer of riper years. For Mr. Polder kept shop; he had indeed inherited the business from his step-mother, and was in the habit of describing the scales on his counter as a "Hair Loom." He liked, said he, to think "as it was like a country shop." Perhaps that was why some of his stock was of venerable antiquity, and why it was of a miscellaneous character. For he dealt in groceries, boot-laces, stationery, potatoes, pomatum, lamp-oil, ladies' blouses, three-penny novels, "kindling," cheap sweets, saucepans, and brown earthenware teapots.

Mr. Polder "minded when 'The Swan with Two Necks' was Squire Swan's residence and was called Goldsend Awl, when there were geese on the common, and folks could fish in the Canal." The Canal had for many years been the name of a street; any geese there might be lived inside the houses, and the Common was the name of a sort of lop-sided square round which stood the best shops, the Post Office, and the Co-operative.

"If Gold's End was once in the country," asked Geeny Backus, "how was it brought up?"

"It never was brought up, my dear," said Mr. Polder; "it had no call. London come to hit."

In ordinary parlance Mr. Polder merely dropped his h's; when specially impressive he put them in where dictionaries omit them.

"London come to hus," he added; "we'd never no call to go looking for London . . . . and half-a-pound of best black 'll make one-and-eleven, Mrs. Fogle; and the kettle two-and-five, and the treacle and henvellops, yesterday, three-and-a-penny. I minds Eye

Waymen, I do ; at least, my father's told me when I was a nipper as he'd a big bone o' one as used to hang in chains on the Common. He was called Bigboot Ben, he was, and they 'anged him for settin' on the Brighton Mail, 'im and four others as was 'is 'complisses."

"Who," inquired Geeny, "was the Brighton Male—was he very strong?"

"My dear, it was the coach as brought the Brighton letters up. And fully harmed it was. So Bigboot Ben got more than he wanted, a slug in his neck and another in his 'orse's 'ocks."

"There are slugs in our back-kitchen," said Geeny with some pride. "What's a horse's ox?"

"I doubt," observed Mr. Polder, "as your mother'll be wanting that Matchless, and you'd better be running 'ome with it."

It was Monday morning, and there seemed some justice in Mr. Polder's reminder ; how could Mrs. Backus start her "wash" without any soap? Geeny had already been gone some time before her arrival at Mr. Polder's, having encountered Alexandra Wingle on her way.

"Why aren't you at school, Geeny Backus?" that young lady had demanded.

"Why aren't you?" Miss Backus had retorted.

"Ma's had another little girl, and I'm kept at home to look after the children, and get pa's dinner. It's to be called Cometta, in illusions, Pa says, to the Comet. We think ordinary Christian names common."

The Wingles family were all for originality and distinction ; Mr. Wingle was a builder, and had added battlements to the top of the bay-window of the front room downstairs, and had also provided a sort of battlemented handle to his dwelling, in allusion to which the legend "St. Wingle's Tower" was painted in red Gothic letters on a green tin ribbon affixed to the front door. Over the best bedroom window Mr. Wingle had let in a stucco face of the great Duke of Wellington, so amply provided with the traditional feature as to suggest to neighbours envious of the Wingle distinction the title of "Nosey Hall" for the Wingle residence.

"There'll be a christening as soon as ma's up," Alexandra remarked casually," and I'm to be a bridesmaid, in white with a comet in silver tissue in my hat."

"They don't have bridesmaids at christenings," objected Geeny jealously.

"*We* do," insisted Miss Wingle. "Families that *are* families have customs that those that aren't families at all would never think of."

Somewhat depressed, Geeny Backus went on to Mr. Polder's and, ultimately, home, where she reported the new arrival at St. Wingle's Tower, and that Alexandra was to be bridesmaid in a tissue-paper comet.

Mrs. Backus opined that the costume indicated would prove to be illegal, and later in the day took Mrs. Torkin's opinion on the subject.

"And 'Cometta,' too! Who'd ever a thought o' such a name for an innocent baby?" Mrs. Backus added, enviously.

"Ay, and it'll be her name when she's grown up and has married perhaps," agreed Mrs. Torkins ; "and she'll be none so proud of a name as tells her age. That's the worst o' them local names. I'd an aunty called Balaclava, and when she turned forty, didn't all the world know? And she might have called herself eight-and-twenty for years together, and got married. 'Ma,' she'd say to my grandmother, 'it's the name you set on me has kep' me single.' Not as her ma would have it. 'No, Bally, it's your squint,' she'd say : 'young men like to know which of 'em a girl's lookin' at."

"Did *you* ever hear tell," queried Mrs. Backus, of a bridesmaid at a christenin'?"

"Well," replied Mrs. Torkins, unwilling to disavow acquaintance with customs alleged to be indicative of family consequence, "things varies. I know some high folks are always buried at night, midnight mostly and some have jools in their weddin' rings."

"Lor! I shouldn't feel respectable wi' a ring like that—I shouldn't feel as folks believed I was proper married."

"Nor me. I suppose Wingleses'll be having a regular party for the christenin'. Miss Frant they'll invite for sure—"

"Oh, and you, Mrs. Torkins," protested Mrs. Backus, meekly. "Mr. Torkins could buy up Wingle and not feel it."

It was, indeed, commonly reported that Mr. Torkins, who owned a little cottage-property, could *sell* a neighbour up and feel it as little as might be.

"Well," said Mrs. Torkins, "and why not yourself? Mrs. Wingle has never been too high to accept a cup o' your tea, and a shrimp, or bit o' salary, for I've seen her. Depend upon it, if they make a doing of it Wingleses'll like the neighbours to see. I shall call round to ask how she and the baby are doin'; and you might send Geeny or Tossy with a message if you're too busy with your wash."

"Well, I will."

And Mrs. Backus resolved to give a touch of distinction to her inquiries. An unassisted verbal message she thought would be common, and she determined to despatch one of her husband's business cards to Mrs. Wingle with a suitable inscription. That lady accordingly received, an hour or two later, per favor of Georgina and Thomasina, a blue ticket with the following legend in print:

Z. BACKUS,

Chimneys Cleaned.

Families waited on at their own Residences.

(as if to assure the public that Z. Backus did not insist on chimneys being sent for cleaning to his place of business.) Above which inscription, in manuscript, rather crowded together to cover up the print of a thumb, was added: "Compts. to Mrs. Wingle and latest, hopping your doing Nicely."

Mrs. Wingle, who liked to think she had a mission to elevate the local social standards, did not deride this message, but saw in it a laudable consciousness of the existence of visiting-cards, and also a sense on Mrs. Backus's part of superior methods being called for in her, Mrs. Wingle's, case. In return she graciously despatched a black-edged envelope addressed to N. Wingle, Esq. (and for the sake of that addition long retained in the corner of the sitting-room looking-glass) on which in green pencil was written in Alexandra's hand: "Ma begs to say I'm doing as well as can be expected and Cometta a bueautiful inphant." In due course also Mrs. Wingle invited Mrs. Backus to the christening, not to the church, but to the subsequent gathering at St. Wingle's Tower. Mrs. Wingle's gathering was universally spoken of by her neighbours as a sort of swelling, boil, or chilblain.

Miss Frant was there, of course. No one had had any doubts of that. She was used to "high" circles, and was an authoress. Mr. Polder, though a bachelor, was there; indeed the Wingle family were pretty deep in his books besides he was the oldest inhabitant, and his nephew had been the Rev. M. Polder, and a missionary, whom the natives of an anonymous island (vaguely reported as situated "at Southsea") had digested instead of his teaching.

Mrs. Torkins was present in more bracelets than had ever before been seen together. Mrs. Sprint, of "The Swan with Two Necks," was present, because she lived in what had been Goldsend Hall, and had the last squire's hatchment hung up in the "lounge" as a cheerful and heraldic corroboration of the sign outside.

But perhaps the pivot of the party was Mrs. Wingle's mother, a widow lady who lived on "a Nuity," and wore in her cap an immense cameo held by her friends to represent her deceased lord, but by the artist originally intended to recall the features of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Nothing could be more aristocratic than Mrs. Wingle mother's name, which she, a woman of lofty instincts, had for many years (since, in fact, the demise of her husband) written St. Ropes, though Joseph Stropes was the designation of her late

THE RECTORS OF MOUNT ARGUS.—I.

FATHER DOMINIC (O'NEILL).
(1872-75, 1875-78, 1882-84, 1890-93).

FATHER ALPHONSUS (O'NEILL).
(1866-69).

FATHER PAUL MARY (PAKENHAM).
(First Rector—1856-57).

FATHER PIUS (DEVINE).
(1869-72).

FATHER OSMOND (MAGUIRE).
(1857-60, 1860-63, 1863-66).

THE RECTORS OF MOUNT ARGUS.—II.

FATHER GABRIEL (O'HANLON).
(1878).

FATHER AUSTIN (HAWKE-SIMS).
(1879-82).

FATHER JEROME (SMITH).
(1884-86).

FATHER RICHARD (FOY).
(1886-89).

FATHER GREGORY (CALLAGHAN).
(1889-90)

lamented in his death certificate. Almost equal in gentility to her name was Mrs. St. Ropes's disorder, which was gout, "Always," she boasted, " hereditary in our family." Indeed, before beginning on her slice of christening cake she reminded her daughter of the necessity she was under of first swallowing " Dr. Savem's Drops," which led the company instantly to figure to themselves a family physician, resident perhaps in the West End, in constant and assiduous attendance.

Mrs. St. Ropes may or may not have foreseen this impression; at all events she did not mention the fact that Dr. Savem's drops were a patent medicine, sovereign against neuritis, arthritis, gout, sciatica, dizziness, noises in the head, lumbago, deafness, sore throat and housemaid's knee ; or that the widow's attention had been drawn to the same by an advertisement in " Social Snips " headed " Are You Well? " and illustrated by the photograph of a stoutish lady in a fur boa, identified as Mrs. Aurelia Purby, of 1116 Durham Road, Darlington, who wrote to the proprietors of Dr. Savem's Drops stating that for one hundred and twenty-nine nights she had never closed her eyes in sleep owing to shooting pains, like the stabs of red-hot knitting-needles, in *all* the joints of *both* hands. Seventeen physicians had successively proclaimed her gout incurable, but a neighbour had asked her, " Why not try Dr. Savem's Drops? " and she had tried them ; after two drops she fell into a soft and easy sleep. Before finishing the first bottle she found herself completely and finally cured, and would be obliged to the proprietors if they would forward per return of post six of the large bottles at 3s. 3d.

Among the lesser, but still shining lights of the company was Mr. Madder, the lodger, an anaemic but ultra-genteel young man who painted coats of arms for a firm of heraldic stationers in Long Acre. His inclusion in the gathering was due not solely to his gentility, but partly to the fact that his bedroom was in requisition as a cloakroom for the ladies, and partly to the circumstance that he had painted the christening cake.

Not the least distinguished feature of the gathering was that cake itself. It resembled a stunted wedding cake and had a silver edging or beading round the top, suggestive of a necklace of dinner pills. In the centre of its upper surface hovered a cherub (or angel) with silver wings, and real hair alleged to have been cut from Cometta's own head. Mr. Madder had further enriched the upper surface of the cake by a picture of St. Wingle's Tower (entirely ignoring any adjacent houses, and representing it as situated in a spacious park), in which the actual tower or handle appeared to be some hundred and fifty feet in height. Not to injure this work of art the cake was inverted, and carved, so to speak, from the bottom.

" If I was you, Mrs. Wingle," declared Mrs. Torkins, " I'd keep it under a glass shade."

Mr. Madder looked gratified, and pulled up his already very high collar and pulled down his cuffs.

" So should I," agreed Mrs. Spint, "and it would be a pretty thing to keep till Cometta's marriage, and make it the top of her wedding cake.

" And whats' more," said Mrs. Torkins, " I'll *give* you the glass shade Mrs. Wingle. I've one just the size on a ebonized stand, with chenill round. It shall be my present to Cometta on her christening day."

All felt how handsome this was in Mrs. Torkins, though no one was surprised. Mr. Torkins being a pawn-broker, all sorts of miscellaneous articles might be expected to be in his possession.

Mrs. St. Ropes bowed, as though the christening cake was her own and the compliments offered to herself, while she inclined her majestic cap, elevated the hand that held her piece of cake, and specially crooked her already crooked little finger.

Mrs. Wingle glanced at her husband, and murmured, " We both of us in Cometta's

name, thank you, Mrs. Torkins, for your kind thought."

She said this with such dignity that poor Mrs. Torkins was not at all sure that she had not taken a liberty.

By this time all the party were munching the christening cake, which tasted like a mixture of plum-pudding and cupboard.

"My!" cried Mrs. Spint, choking, "if I haven't chewed on something!"

"I shouldn't be surprised," declared her hostess symbolically, "if you'd got the Ten Thousand a Year legacy!"

Somewhat nervously, Mrs. Spint (behind her pocket-handkerchief, which was one of her best half-dozen purchased after the demise of her late father, and adorned with a deep mourning border) disengaged a crooked sixpence.

"I thought as much," quoth Mrs. Wingle triumphantly; "Ten Thousand Pounds per Annum within a twelvemonth, Mrs. Spint, *that* means; and let me congratulate you."

"And Mrs. Spint is the lady as'll know how to spend it!" opined Mr. Polder, rubbing his hands together jocosely. "If there's any more leggicies in the cake I'd not say no to another slice."

Before Mr. Wingle, who was "carving" the cake, had time to comply with this pleasant hint, Miss Frant emitted a sort of compromise between a crunch and a choke.

"Ho, ho!" cried Mrs. Wingle, "so *you've* got something too, Miss Frant!"

To speak literally the something had got *her;* on one side of her jaw, towards the back of her throat, reigned in solitary majesty a single tooth only, (it was a double one), and round this some metallic object was now entwined.

"A wedding or an engagement!" remarked Mrs. Wingle encouragingly.

Miss Frant needed encouragement; her struggles were rather more protracted, and certainly more severe, than Mrs. Spint's had been. But they were ultimately successful, and resulted in the appearance before the public of a plain hoop-ring.

"Dear me!" cried the humorous Mr. Polder, who found himself suddenly a wit without foreseeing it; "We shan't have Miss Frant among us long, it seems."

The expression unfortunately was, in the mind of Mrs. Backus, associated with the formula used by the club-doctor, when intimating that even *his* skill could hardly prolong a patient's life; and she said in a low voice:

"Lor! I suppose these Amens (omens?) are like dreams, and goes by contrairies."

"Tut, tut!" cried Mr. Polder, a little dashed; "I said *Miss Frant!* When that Hemblem has done its orfice, where'll *Miss* Frant be then? There won't be any such person. She'll be another lady altogether. Mrs.——"

"No names, *please*, Mr. Polder!" begged Mrs. Spint, chuckling, and tying up her Ten Thousand a Year in a corner of her funeral handkerchief.

To do him justice, Mr. Polder had no notion of mentioning a name; if pressed for one, as that for which Miss Frant would relinquish her own, he would have been extremely at a loss.

Miss Frant assumed some dignity of demeanour.

"Had I ever cared to change," she observed in a lofty aside to Mrs. St. Ropes, "it would not have been to become *Mrs.* Anything . . . ."

"Oh, Ma!" Alexandra Wingle almost screamed, "I've swallowed the engagement."

But it was a false alarm; what had gone down was merely a rather sharp and scratchy portion of the "icing" of the cake.

"So!" chuckled Mr. Polder, "there's a Hen Gagement, as well as a fortin and a marriage in the cake! Praps it'll be *my* turn now. Setting where I do," and he slightly pressed Mrs. St. Rope's foot with his own under the table. "I feel *like* being Hen Gaged."

Strange to say, Mrs. St. Ropes, in spite of her name (thus by implication imperilled), her

cameo and her gout, did not take this at all amiss. True, no one saw the squeeze, and no one but herself felt it ; emboldened by that circumstance, she smiled into her tea-cup as her daughter said :

" Pray, Mr. Polder, don't be looking at Alexandra ; don't be putting ideas into her head yet awhile. Young ladies of thirteen and four months aren't to be set thinking of engagements."

As Mr. Polder was certainly on the prudent side of sixty, it is probable he was *not* thinking of Alexandra. Alexandra's grandmamma smiled quite broadly now into her tea cup.

" Dear no! " said Mr. Polder. " If I was thinking of Alexandra at all it were in a diff'rent copacity. In the copacity she's performing to-day, th' at the Halter, not the Fount."

" Bridesmaid! " cried Mrs. Spint, with great acumen.

Mrs. St. Ropes fell, as she regarded Alexandra with fresh interest, into a sentimental reverie. " It would," she thought, " be new and pretty. A grand-daughter to hold one's bokay."

Mrs. St. Ropes knew all about Mr. Polder. He was a prudent (not to say stingy) bachelor. He had a good business, and the adjoining house was not despicable. Mr. Stropes had been a widower—a heart never previously occupied appealed to her as also " new." Mr. Polder owned house-property, and certainly had " banked money " as well.

Absently-mindedly Mrs. St. Ropes just touched Mr. Polder's foot with her own ; merely touched it, and that accidentally. She was not the woman to press it with her own—especially as (remembering a certain bulge in Mr. Polder's boot) it seemed possible his toes might be as tender as his heart.

A bottle of port wine was now opened ; it was Mrs. Spint's offering to the gathering, and as she had known she should help to drink it, she had selected a not inferior brand.

" And I," said Mr. Spint, who was a good-natured man enough, " will send a bottle of sherry. What's tea to drink an innocent babby's health in? "

So everybody had a couple of wine glasses, except Alexandra, who was accommodated with an egg cup.

Mr. Polder clinked glasses with Mrs. St. Ropes, and boldly proposed Cometta's health and many of them—whether of various sorts of health or of further Comettas the company was left in uncertainty.

" And couplin'," he added, " the 'ealths of Cometter's pa and ma, and likewise the grandma."

" Oh, but," protested Mrs. Wingle hospitably, " that's too much to go in one glass! Drink up Cometta first and join ma, and me and Wingle in another."

No one had the least objection. The second toast was drunk in sherry, a " stout " and somewhat heady brand.

(" I'll let 'em feel that they're drinking something," Mr. Spint had said to himself. " I'll warm their vitals.")

Mr. Polder's vitals were clearly warmed.

" Law! " said he, " If I wasn't thinking so much of Mr. and Mrs. Wingle that I forgot to include their distinguished ma and ma-in-law."

Mrs. St. Ropes raised an eyebrow (the other had a slight scar across it, the result of an accident in her infancy, and would not go up.) She hardly relished such a lapse of memory. But a glance of Mr. Polder's eye reassured her ; she perceived his feigned forgetfulness was but a " roose."

" Not," said Mr. Polder, " but what Mrs. St. Ropes deserves a toast to herself."

" Hear, hear," applauded Mr. Madder, as the only other gentleman in the company unconnected with the family.

Mrs. St. Ropes bowed—with urbane majesty—and unconsciously allowed Mr. Polder to fill her glass, to drink her own health.

" I lifts my glass," cried he, " to the 'ealth and 'appiness——'

" Gone! " murmured the widow, in a Siddons-like aside.

"To the perpetchal 'ealth and *renood* 'appiness," said Mr. Polder "of the lady as we must (for the present) illude to as—Mrs. St. Ropes. While," he proceeded argumentatively, "Britons 'as Highs"—and he turned his own eyes gallantly on the lady named—"we can 'ardly believe as Mrs. St. Ropes will be her title long."

There was immense applause, under cover of which the *toastee* swallowed her sherry Thus encouraged, Mr. Polder chuckled again, and fumbled in his waistcoat pocket.

"What," asked he, holding up a slightly crumpled, but shining, object, "does *that* look like? I can't guess. I found it in my second piece . . . . Can any lady oblige by naming the harticle?"

"Why, Mr. Polder!" giggled Mrs. Wingle "if you haven't been and got the engagement ring in your second piece!"

"Dear hearts!" cried Mrs. Backus.

"I *never* did!" murmured Mrs. Torkins.

"*Truly* ridiculous!" sniffed Miss Frant, as though in confidence to the company at large.

"Oh, I don't know," cried Mrs. Wingle.

"Nor me," agreed her husband.

"Why should you?" wondered Mrs. St. Ropes.

"Nothing ridiklus about it," quoth Mr. Polder, "no more'n for Miss Frant to get the weddin' ring. Oo grudged it her? Not me; no, nor yet envied—anybody—so I didn't. Very well, then."

If Mr. Polder spoke less lucidly than he intended he was singularly well understood—especially by Miss Frant, who rose from table with a toss of her head, and a certain trembling of it too, and shook the crumbs from her lap as though they had been the dust from her feet.

"Having," she said, with crushing sweetness to her hostess, "another engagement, Mrs. Wingle, I hope you will excuse my retiring."

"Another engagement!" commented Mr. Polder (with whom Miss Frant did not deal.) "One a'ready, eh? Letsoap without an engagement ring, engagement rings being truly ridiklus."

"Never mind her," whispered Mrs. St. Ropes, "don't you pay any attention to her."

"Not to *her*. No; it's not to her I should think o' *paying attentions*," and Mr. Polder in his answering whisper conveyed a world of meaning.

Mrs. St. Ropes was quite confused, and protested she couldn't understand him at all.

The ring having completed the circuit of the table, had been returned to its "winner," as the gathering described Mr. Polder. The gathering had now, however, left the table, all except Mr. Polder and Mrs. St. Ropes. Miss Frant, tremulously escorted by Mrs. Wingle, had gone upstairs to the Madder cloakroom, where she was endeavouring to disavow Mr. Polder, so to speak.

"He is *not*," she repeated earnestly, "he is *not* of our class. You must make allowances, Miss Frant. Ignorance is *born* in some people." Mrs. Wingle was clearly of opinion that she and Miss Frant had been born completely educated.

He certainly is not of *my* class," said Miss Frant loftily. "I had not foreseen meeting him."

Mrs. St. Ropes and Mr. Polder were still at table.

"So you can't understand me at all?" he asked.

"Not in the least," declared Mrs. St. Ropes, firmly.

"Not this?"

Mr. Polder held the engagement ring out between his forefinger and thumb, much as if he had been a conjurer about to change it into a rabbit or a new-laid egg.

Mrs. St. Ropes looked at it with some interest, but shook her head. Setting down her wine glass, her hand lay near it on the table cloth. Mr. Polder clutched it.

"Nor this?" he demanded, slipping the ring upon the "engagement finger," "I

think you understand *this*. Eh, Mrs. St. Ropes? "

"Mr. Polder! How can I help understanding *that?* Oh, Mr. Polder! How you've taken me back! "

. . . . . .

As Mr. Polder stepped home he said to himself, "There's no doubt about the Nuity: eighty-five pounds a year, eighty-five pounds sterling per annium," he dwelt on the "sterling" as if, had Mrs. St. Rope's annuity been less unimpeachable, it would have been payable in pounds avoirdupois.

"Eighty-five pounds sterling, as I've ascertained afore movin' a step arter her. And the furniture where she lives all her own leggicied to her by the first ventur. Not a unpleasant woman neither; and *genteel;* a figure-'ead, as you might say. And Alexandra *shall* be bridesmaid—it'll be noo, and rether striking. It was goodish port—I shouldn't mind a dozen of it."

BETHLEHEM.

By the Very Rev. BONIFACE CONNOLLY, C.P.

On the summit of a grey ridge about five miles south of Jerusalem, and a short distance from the highroad to Hebron, the ancient town of Bethlehem was built. Its history dated back to patriarchal times; and its environment had been the scene of many of those remarkable events which were divinely intended to shape the destiny of the chosen people. For there Rachel died and was buried; there Ruth had gleaned in the harvest fields of Booz; and there also David was born, and kept his father's sheep from the lion and the bear, and was ultimately called from the pasture and the flock and anointed king. The name Bethlehem signified the "House of Bread," a designation which it derived from the singular fertility of the surrounding country, and which in the imaginative language of the East became peculiarly suggestive of rest and hospitality to the weary traveller and pious pilgrim. It could be no matter of surprise, therefore, that the khan or inn—a necessary adjunct to every Oriental village of importance—was one of the outstanding features of Bethlehem. This khan was a low structure of rough mountain stone, which, according, to the simple requirements of the age, stood unadorned and unfurnished; and might be more properly described as a place of temporary safety and shelter than a comfortable inn. It consisted of a large square courtyard enclosed by porticos, which, viewed from the inside, appeared to be a series of arched recesses. The floor of each recess was paved; and along the front of the recesses there ran a platform similarly paved, and raised a foot or two above the level of the courtyard. When travellers arrived, they tied their animals in the enclosure, and supplied them with water and provender, and then took possession of a vacant recess. They spread their mats on the platform; refreshed themselves with food and drink which they had carried with them, or purchased at the khan for a nominal price; and finally having seen to the security of their baggage, they reclined upon the pavement of the recess for a night's repose. Those who came late were obliged to content themselves with such accommodation as might be secured in the courtyard below the platform, wherever there was an unoccupied space among the horses, mules and camels. And for that very reason—on exceptional occasions when the concourse of people was great—a stay at the khan was extremely unpleasant; for the crowded animals; the intrusion of the pariah dogs, and the unwelcome presence and

importunity of the deformed and the diseased of the village, added considerably to the ordinary discomforts of the wayfarer.

One such exceptional occasion of overcrowding occurred in the khan of Bethlehem at the time when Joseph and Mary presented themselves. The cause of that unusual assemblage of strangers was to be found in an edict published by the Emperor Augustus. The Roman Empire of those days—extending as it did from Calidonia to Mesopotamia—embraced practically the whole civilised world. It was then the ambition of the Emperor to take a general census of his dominions ; that the number of subjects might be precisely ascertained ; that the valuation of property tioned ; and that the military resources might be accurately determined. The decree, therefore, went forth " that the whole world should be enrolled." But in carrying out this decree of enrolment there were two possible methods of procedure ; one was the Roman method which was conducted at the place of residence; the other was the Jewish method which was conducted at the place of origin. The Romans rigorously adhered to their own method of enrolment as being more orderly, and less liable to disturbances ; and it was with undisguised reluctance that in this—as in other matters—they departed from their regular practice. Nevertheless, in the case of the Jews who clung to the memory of their tribal relations, an exception was graciously made ; and they were in consequence permitted to register in the place of origin according to their own fashion. And as Joseph and Mary were " of the house and family of David " they left their northern home at Nazareth in the mountains of Zabulon, and went up to Bethlehem—the city of David—" to be enrolled." After traversing a journey of eighty miles under a wintry sky and along miry roads, they arrived at the khan to find the entrance blocked with beasts of burden, and every available piece of ground occupied. In answer to an anxious inquiry they received the reply that " there was no room." Notwithstanding their fatigue and loneliness they made a diligent search for some other resting-place ; and at length took refuge in a cave that was excavated in the adjacent chalk hills, and commonly used as a stable for cattle. And there in that cold and desolate spot, veiled by the darkness of midnight, the Eternal Son of God stooped to the condition of suffering humanity, and Christ the Saviour of men and the light of the world was miraculously born.

It so happened that certain shepherds were guarding their flocks and keeping the watches through the night. They were simple, unlettered men ; doomed to a life of toil and hardship ; exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather; inured to patience and resignation, by the daily privations of hunger and thirst and scanty clothing. Their range of thought was contracted ; their knowledge of the amusements and festivities of the outside world was scarcely sufficient to make them discontented with their own lot ; their eyes were wont to gaze on the starry firmament and the majestic grandeur of the " mountain and the flood "; their ears were used to the barking of dogs, the bleating of sheep, the lowing of cattle and the murmuring noises of the pine woods ; their hearts rested on those unchangeable affections which were fostered so tenderly in the unsullied purity of their secluded homes ; their occupation was to guard their flocks by day and by night with the view of saving them from beasts of prey and from robbers. While thus engaged they were suddenly confronted by an angelic visitant, whose heavenly radiance shone round about them ; and they heard the voice of the Angel announcing " the good tidings of great joy which was to be to all people." Christ the Saviour was born in the city of David and He might be seen wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. And presently they were surrounded by a multitude of the angelic choir, and the new anthem of worship, concord and unity was entoned for the first time : " Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will." And the shepherds immediately said one

to another : " Let us go to Bethlehem and see what has come to pass." Guided by the lamp of the khan they made their way to Bethlehem, and there found the cave, and the Babe lying in the manger, and Joseph and Mary in thoughtful and silent adoration bending over Him. Their souls were transported with a holy joy, and their minds were filled with supernatural faith and charity. They reverently bowed down and offered the divine Child the homage of their grateful hearts! They related to Joseph and Mary and the inhabitants of Bethlehem what they had seen and what they had heard that night from the Angels ; and having thus borne testimony to the divine Babe, and having done the work of Evangelists, they returned to their flocks praising and glorifying God. After their departure the birth of Christ was no longer a secret in Bethlehem. The surprising news circulated with the rapidity of lightning ;- and wonder and astonishment marked the countenance and modulated the speech of the excited villagers. The ungentle surroundings of the birth appealed to their humanity, softened their hearts, and elicited their sympathy ; the mysterious story of the shepherds aroused their curiosity and inspired them with holy fear and reverence. This commotion was not all in vain ; for by the time the ardour of awful amazement had abated, the congestion caused by the visitors who had come up for the census was to a great extent relieved ; and the people of Bethlehem were then enabled to give a more practical expression to their sentiments by providing a house in their midst for the reception of the Holy Family. But having done so much their emotions became normal once more ; and Joseph and Mary and the divine Infant were left in peaceful obscurity to comply with the ordinary legal enactments, and to await the arrival of the Magi.

The Magi were already on their way. They had been previously notified of the birth of the Redeemer by means of a sign from heaven, which took the form of a luminous body, and first appeared to them probably about the time of the Annunciation. The natural simplicity of their religion, the integrity of their moral virtues, and their assiduous devotion to the cause of science and truth merited for them this supernatural favour. In fact all the circumstances of their lives afforded them opportunities of studying wisdom and of preparing themselves for a higher vocation. They were of princely if not of royal blood ; they were of the Sacerdotal class, and presumably natives of Persia. Their religious system was far superior to other systems of Pagan origin ; for they recognised One Supreme God, and worshipped Him by a grave and reverent observance ; their mysticism, austerity and prayer were strictly conformable to the light of natural reason ; idols were excluded from their temples ; and their devotional exercises were conducted with a pious and solemn demeanour. Their caste had mingled with the Chaldean soothsayers in the reign of Nabuchadonosor ; and then it was that they learned the Hebrew prophecies from the Jewish captives, and especially from Daniel whose superiority in the gift of divination they were compelled to admit. The inspired predictions concerning the Messiah were thus disseminated among the Magi and carefully prepreserved from age to age till the destined hour had come. Immediately preceding the advent of Christ, therefore, wise men of all nations were in a state of intense expectancy ; there was a widespread feeling that a new era was about to dawn ; and in the East there was a settled conviction that a king was about to arise in Judea with divine power to conquer the world. The Magi accordingly scanned the heavens with eager expectation in the hope of discovering some portent of the event ; and while their minds were imperceptibly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, their senses were at an opportune moment arrested by the appearance of a brilliant object resembling a star. To their knowledge the manifestation of this sidereal phenomenon was outside the ordinary course, and of sur-

passing splendour ; and as they entertained the belief that man's life in general was influenced by the heavenly bodies, they felt persuaded that the new star indicated the birth of the long expected king. Undeterred, therefore, by the prospect of a return journey measuring more than two thousand miles, and necessitating an absence of not less than three years from their homes, they set out at once to testify their allegiance to the sovereign Lord of the universe. Mounted on camels, and attired in graceful tunics, high head-dresses and gorgeous flowing mantles, they crossed the Tigris and the Euphrates, travelled over the great Syrian desert, passed through the Jordan valley, and entered Jerusalem from Jerico. At first their presence in the city was scarcely noticed, because the people of Jerusalem were accustomed to caravans of foreign passengers, and the striking costumes of the Orient. But great was their surprise when they heard the strange tenor of the inquiry : " Where is he that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen His star in the East and are come to adore Him? " The question was repeated from house to house with feverish excitement, disturbing as it went the whole population, till, at last, it reached the palace of Herod. The decrepit and jealous king was instantly seized with consternation ; yet realising the imperative need of caution and secrecy, he cunningly convoked his counsellors, and " inquired of them where Christ should be born." But they said : " In Bethlehem of Juda." Whereupon he called the Magi to a private interview, and having made himself acquainted with all the details of the wondrous star, he sent them to seek the Child till they should find him; and he furthermore requested them to bring him back word that he also might have the privilege of adoring. Depressed by the cold reception and sinister manners of the old king, the Magi left Jerusalem by night without guides and without escort ; but as soon as they had departed from the city, they were exceedingly elated by the reappearance of the star which thenceforth preceded them to Bethlehem and " stood over where the Child was." All doubts then vanished from their minds ; and there was no longer any hesitation on their part as to what they should do ; for they had been divinely instructed beforehand in the mystery of the Incarnation. They entered the house and profoundly adored the " Word made flesh," offering Him gold as a symbol of His royalty, and frankincense as an acknowledgment of His divinity, and myrrh in recognition of His human nature. And having thus fulfilled their duty to their Creator, and their Redeemer, they were relieved from the inconvenience of their promise to Herod by being miraculously warned to return to their own country by another road.

After they had gone, the fury of Herod was intensified by the unexpected frustration of his plans ; and while gloomy visions of his own downfall haunted him, he sought in the depths of his despair for other means to give effect to the fell purpose of his heart. Unfortunately there were not wanting examples in history to aid him in the elaboration of his wicked scheme. Thus it was narrated that Pharao, desiring to rid himself of the Israelites, condemned all their male infants to be drowned in the Nile ; and it was likewise recorded that the Roman Republic, under a superstitious apprehension that a king was coming, decreed that all the male children who might be born in a certain year should be abandoned. And surely Herod, whose hands were reeking with the blood of his own sons, was not to be outdone in savage cruelty by any despot or oligarchy. He therefore made a calculation as to the probable age of the Child, according to what he had been told by the Magi concerning the star ; and, without further delay, he issued an order that all the " men children from two years old and under " in and around Bethlehem should be slain. Then it was that lamentations and great mourning were heard ; and that hoary monarch, whose flagitious conduct had never been spoken of above a whisper, was powerless to quell the

THE RECTORS OF MOUNT ARGUS.—III.

FATHER ALBERT (McKILLOP).
(1893).

FATHER MICHAEL (WATTS-RUSSELL).
(1893-96).

FATHER PHILIP (COGHLAN).
(1896-99).

FATHER WILFRID (O'HAGAN).
(1899-1902, 1902-05).

FATHER HILARY (MARA).
(1905-08).

THE RECTORS OF MOUNT ARGUS.—IV.

FATHER FRANCIS (KELLY).
(1917-20).
FATHER RICHARD (CURRAN).
(1920-23).

FATHER SEBASTIAN (SLEAN).
(1908-11, 1911-14, 1923—).
FATHER WILLIAM (BRENNAN).
(1914-17).

angry outcries of desolate mothers robbed of their innocent babes. It was as in the days of the captivity, when Rachel from her tomb was supposed to have wailed with the disconsolate daughters of Rama. But an Angel spoke to Joseph in sleep and counselled him to fly with the Child into Egypt ; and " he arose and took the Child and His Mother " and fled from Bethlehem to Egypt, and so escaped the tyrant's hands.

ONE CHRISTMAS EVE.

By MARGARET McGARVEY.

THERE are many things in Killavee and there are many things that are not. It is a wild spot on Donegal's Atlantic coast and one of the many things that are is its grand, simple beauty of rock and sea and free space of sky.

It compensates—along with many other things—such as a great, kindly charity amongst the widely-scattered population, a marvellously sympathetic old priest, and a great trust in the good God, for the many things that are not.

Of plenty, there is not ; for the land is sparse and rocky, and the climate harsh and cold, and the Atlantic that gives them so kindly a supply of glittering fish, that is such a home to most of its swarthy dark sons, gives them also many a sweeping wind and many a fierce, wintry storm. Such a storm is roaring around the very loneliest of its rock-perched cabins one Christmas Eve, and throwing into glaring contrasts the things that are not in this wild bit of Donegal.

For, inside that cabin, there is not any comfort—very little fire, scarce food, scarcer furniture, and no happiness at all. Of gloom there is plenty—gloom that the firelight very faintly glowing on the hearth cannot destroy.

That firelight gleams on no shining delph on the old dresser, though now and then it catches a bit of gay colour in a tattered quilt on a low bed in the corner, and as you stand and watch, it catches yet another object that shows you there are some thing in Killavee other than its grand, simple nature.

An empty, black bottle stands on the little table—telling only too clearly in that neglected cabin that there is one most undesirable thing in Killavee—a public-house.

Seated on a tiny stool by the fire—the only bit of life in the lonely picture is a fair-haired, sad-faced child of no more than nine or ten years.

Her eyes are full of tears, as she listens half vaguely to the roaring winds and draws a tiny brown cape more closely around her shoulders.

And this is her story and this she is listening for.

On Mollie's entry into this weary world her young mother had left it—and her to battle its trials. Her father, never a very steady man, though under his wife's gentle influence a practising, regular Catholic, completely gave way when his young wife died, and, once started on the downward way, never drew back ; drinking himself out of work and into poverty, and now for almost ten years giving up his duty to his God and his Faith. Utter neglect of his once happy home resulted in the sad picture of this Christmas Eve.

Kindly neighbours wished to take his little girl away from her miserable surroundings, but he would have none of it ; so they had to be content with watching as well as they could that she was not starved or ill-treated.

Only the kindly old priest saw with real faith, and bade them not to worry, saying that God would watch His innocent lamb and, perhaps, she was the weapon He was using to win the sinner's soul.

For, roughly, the man loved his motherless child, but his lower nature had so completely overcome him, drink's curse sat so heavily upon him, that he was blind to his neglect and his surroundings—and the care supplied by his kindly neighbours was unheeded by him. Night after night this last week he had come home storming and raving in drink, always bringing the hated black bottle with him.

It was his preparation for the coming festival of Christmas, and it is this return that sad-eyed Mollie is listening wistfully for to-night, dreading far more than the storm outside the wild hilarity of his homecoming.

" If only he didna' bring the ugly, black bottle—when he takes it, he gets so fierce," she sighed, talking childishly to herself.

" How I hate it ; if only he'd come and take me to see Fr. John's lovely Crib, that Biddy told me of to-day. Oh! I'd love to see it, only I'd never find my way! "

Then her tears flowed again and she stood up, a quaint, pathetic figure, with the firelight shining like a halo in her soft, fair hair —a lovely vision amongst her gloomy surroundings. Now she is at the open door and the wind is whirling in around her in great gusts. Darkness has almost, though not quite, descended.

Suddenly Mollie is out in the storm, her tiny troubled mind and innocent soul one great ache of an overwhelming loneliness, this great festival-eve—cold, as was that other Fair Child, so long ago, but unheeding, in her anxiety for the company of the one human being who ought to have been with her now in her motherless loneliness.

" 'Tis go an' meet him, I'll do," she whispers to herself. " Maybe he's comin' up the turn, or maybe now he's gone to the Chapel "—poor, innocent child—" Biddy says almost everyone goes to-night, that's why she's left me so long. Maybe he's went to see Fr. John's Crib—if only he had taken me. Maybe I'd meet him if I run to the turn."

And now Mollie is hurrying on, her tiny ill-clad feet pattering feebly on the rocky road, her little figure swaying in the wild, Atlantic wind.

On unconsciously into the night, unheeding distance in her loneliness, and then presently lured by a glowing light, she finds herself in the tiny chapel porch, just in the hollow below the rocks, and the gloomy cabin perched there.

And then Mollie's heart gave a great bound, Mollie's face grew suddenly flushed, and Mollie's sweet voice uttered a surprised " Oh-oh-oh! "

Now, there was one great blessing the people of Killavee had, and that was their kindly, anxious parish priest, and in his endeavour to brighten their lives, he had prepared a beautiful surprise for them this Christmas Eve, and he had worked to his utmost ability and had succeeded ; for his Crib was both beautiful and natural. There, before Mollie, amidst green moss and leaves and light, knelt the sweetest lady she had ever seen, all in blue and white with a lovely smiling face, and before her, on a little bunch of straw lay a Baby—the loveliest Baby little Mollie had ever seen, smiling at her and holding out tiny hands from the bed of straw and moss.

There were other men, too—strange men—and there were lovely figures with big white wings—and here Mollie's brain began to work. Timidly she stepped nearer, very timidly ; angels had wings, Biddy told her, and angels were only in heaven with the Blessed Virgin and Jesus, and Biddy told her He was little like herself.

Could it be? Oh, could it be? The child-mind whirled ; how she got there or what brought her all fled.

She was in heaven—that was enough. Biddy told her that her mamma was there with the Blessed Virgin.

She stepped as near as possible and whispered : " Blessed Virgin, bring me to my mamma. Biddy says she's here. Isn't this heaven? Isn't this the little Jesus? "

No answer ; but just then some women came in, smiled at the child, and passed on

into the Chapel. (They were hurrying to Confession and believed the child would be there when they came back.)

The opening door blew in a gust of whirling snowflakes, a fine shower of snow had started.

Mollie shivered, and, stooping down, she saw the flakes blown right on to the little waxen Infant.

In a moment, her little warm heart all on fire with pity, she had the little brown cape off and it was laid gently over the tiny figure.

" You must be so cold without a shawl, an' it snowing, too ; there, I'll give you mine. Oh! " turning again to the Blessed Virgin's statue, " tell me where is my mamma! "

There was nothing but silence, save for the storm outside.

Then all in a moment another thought came to Mollie. She must find her father ; perhaps, then, he'd find mamma. Anyway she must get him to see the Crib. Perhaps, after all, this was Fr. John's that everyone was talking about. A last long look, a lingering child's caressing touch to the waxen figure smiling under the little brown cape, and Mollie turned into the darkness.

Her tiny feet hastened in her eagerness to get her father ; and then natural fear of the storm and the darkness, bewildering her tiny brain, hastened them still more.

Scarce knowing where she was going, dazed with her vision, she ran on—when, suddenly, what was this? A sharp pain in her foot, a stumble, and then Mollie felt herself falling—falling into space.

. . . . . .

Meantime the drunkard had stumbled his way home—if home his desolated cabin could be called, where everything was gloom but for the fair-haired child whose innocence filled it with light.

Stumbling in at the open door, where the Atlantic wind swept over the threshold, halting suddenly, with an awful curse at the darkness, and the very faint glow on the almost cold hearth—calling aloud on Mollie with a strange mixture of endearments and curses—the drunkard was a pitiful spectacle of humanity this Christmas Eve. In a moment he has drawn the black bottle from his pocket (as little Mollie dreaded) when the door, blown wider open with a wild gust of wind, knocks his shoulder and sends him lurching, the bottle flying and crashing in atoms on the stone flags at his feet.

Another great curse and he has turned out. " Mollie must be with those d——d meddlesome neighbours," he thinks. " Well, let them have her, they want to keep her from him—they think him a beast ; well, a beast he'll be, he'll go back to Killavee and get more drink, he might as well."

On out stumblingly, down the path little Mollie trod such a short while ago. The darkness is intense now, but he staggers on blindly ; when, presently, he finds himself mingling with a very small crowd and drawing towards a dark building and a doorway through which a glow of light floods.

" Well, it mustn't be so late as he thought. It is surely some women going in to shop at the general store in Killavee." The store where he spends so much of his wasted time. Then, before he is well aware, they are in the light, and—he puts his hand to his bewildered head—

Great God of heaven! Where is he? His drink-sodden brain coming in from the darkness, cannot grasp the scene!

What lights ; what softness ; what green leaves ; what white-robed, white-winged forms are these. And over all, what sweet-faced figure in blue?

One he knew as fair. Could it be his sweet Mollie of the days of long ago?

He goes nearer (as little Mollie did) and looks down and then a more bewildered look fills his hazy eyes—a strange, wild look.

" This is not,surely, Mollie lying there—his little Mollie! "

It is her brown cape, of that he is sure, but if this is she, she is waxen and still—

" God!—surely she is not dead! "

He is tentatively putting out a trembling hand ; he already feels the soft, brown stuff, when faintly, sweetly, comes stealing to his ears, the opening words of an old Christmas hymn.

It is only the choir practising the hymns for to-morrow's feast, but it is a quaint hymn, an air he remembers to have heard his gentle Mollie sing :—

" See, amid the Winter's Snow."

He is held by it as it comes stealing to his senses, and stands a long moment, amazed ; then it becomes too much for his racked nerves.

Is he back in the days of long ago? God of heaven, where is he at all?

He turns wildly as if to go again, and almost rushes into the arms of quiet Father John, who has been told by some women of Mollie's being at the Crib. He steadies the man who is wild and incoherent, raving of Mollie and her brown coat, gets some sort of sense into him, and in the way that only our beloved Catholic priests can, he has him both soothed and assured and touched with a wonderful sympathetic softness and reason.

Slowly the dulled brain understands. Mollie was here, her little brown cape explains that, but the priest points out (and his kind eyes dim at sight of the innocent offering) she has gone, and not being at home, she must have gone to look for the father. Presently the priest has got a light, and they are out in the darkness, along the rock road, looking for storm-tossed Mollie.

Not far had they to go—just a few yards—and lying face downwards on the rock, where the great Mission Cross stood, lay Mollie.

She had strayed in the darkness, after her vision of heaven, had fallen forward, and her head head had struck the sharp step of granite at the great Cross.

Now, where the fair hair blew over the temple, there was an ugly, dark mark, and her baby form was as still and cold as the waxen one inside over which her little brown coat was laid so gently.

The drunkard's grief was almost uncontrollable when his great loss became real to his dulled brain. But Fr. John was gentle, and it was Christmas Eve, and in rushing to get her father into heaven, Mollie had surely fallen there herself, and because the heavenly Child was not going to let her innocent charity pass unthanked—so, when He pleaded for the drunkard's soul from his heavenly Father He got it, and in the dim Chapel when the lights were out but for the one red glow, and the singing had ceased, Fr. John got his reward for the labour of his love for his people, when he pronounced absolution over the soul of Mollie's convert.

And he never looked back—the man who had been dreaded as the wildest drinker in Killavee—aye, in all that wide peninsula of Fanad.

He had not bright-haired Mollie, and his cabin and his heart were desolate with an awful loneliness.

But he had two other things that he cherished above all on earth : He had his Faith—his great Catholic Faith, bought by the loss of his child, his hope in the mercy of God to pardon his past and bring him, after all, to the heaven of his loved ones.

He had that and he had also a strange Guardian Angel that kept him strong when temptation raged. It was a tiny, ragged, brown cape that covered the Child Jesus one Christmas Eve.

IRISH POETRY OF TO-DAY.

By M. J. McMANUS.

THERE is a striking passage in a play of the East written by a young English poet who died during the Great War. The Caliph of the drama is speaking to the chief character, Hassan :

> THE CALIPH.—" Ah, if there shall ever arise a nation whose people have forgotten poetry or whose poets have forgotten the people, though they send their ships round Taprobane and their armies across the hills of Hindustan, though their city be greater than Babylon of old, though they mine a league into the earth or mount to the stars on wings—what of them? "
>
> HASSAN.—" They will be a dark patch upon the world."

Here we have, in the moving language of a poet, an indictment that remains in the memory of the modern materialistic world which cares not for poetry. It is a warning which we in Ireland would do well to take seriously to heart. If there is one antidote which is capable of combating the poisonous cynicism which seems to be darkening the minds of our people in these days of stress and turmoil, it is surely the culivation of a love for things that are beautiful and apart, things which are in their essence divine, things which, in the final analysis, are more than food or raiment. The people without a native literature are, indeed, little else than " a dark patch upon the world." And the highest and most spiritual form of literature is poetry.

When we set out to discuss any period or phase of Irish literature we are confronted at the outset with the question, " What is Irish literature? " For the purposes of this article I have had, regretfully, to put aside all idea of dealing, however lightly, with anything written in the Gaelic tongue. The reason for this is sufficiently obvious. For the vast majority of us in this generation English is the language in which we read, write, and think. We have, therefore, to confine ourselves to Irish poetry written in the English language, which, for convenience sake we shall call Anglo-Irish poetry. There is, of course, a vast amount of verse written in the English language by Irishmen which does not come within our scope, for the simple reason that it differs in no essential point from similar verse written by Englishmen. We are dealing now, it should be made clear, with something which is vitally and vastly different from English literature. To be classed as Irish, poetry must be above all things racy of the soil. It must, in spite of the English speech of which it is built, possess distinctive markings and characteristics which betray at once its Irish origin. The point might be illustrated in this way. A poem, before it can be definitely labelled Irish must be such that an educated foreigner, say, a well-read American, can feel at once that there is a something, an indefinable something about it which is not found in the work of English writers. This " something " Mathew Arnold has called the " Celtic note," and Thomas MacDonagh the " Irish mode." It does not merely mean that the book or the poem deals with Irish persons, places or emotions. Thousands of such works exist, but they have no claim to be called Irish because in their outlook, their style and their whole mental attitude they do not differ in any important degree from similar books written by English authors. Of course, it always happens that if Ireland produces a writer of unquestionable genius England will at once acclaim him as a glory added to English literature. This is inevitable, but even the most narrow-minded amongst us should find no cause for annoyance here. On the contrary, we can find scope for pride in

the fact that, having had our own language destroyed and the language of the foreigner thrust upon us, we should nevertheless have produced writers of genius who took that language and discovered in it hidden beauties which were not before suspected.

For the purposes of this article, I propose to deal only with the poetry of Irish writers who are now living or who are only recently dead, and the period embraced will be, therefore, roughly the last thirty years. About the beginning of this period there appeared from the pen of Standish O'Grady—a curiously lonely figure in Anglo-Irish literature—a series of romances founded upon the old heroic literature of our early Gaelic civilisation. He breathed new life into the old sagas and by his infectious enthusiasm brought a new literary revival into being. Soon there appeared notable work from other younger writers, the most remarkable being the poetry of W. B. Yeats and George Russell, and the dramatic work of J. M. Synge and Lady Gregory. With the latter we are not, however, concerned here.

It is difficult to assign a definite place to Yeats in Irish literature, always understanding "Irish" in the sense which we have already explained. There is no doubt whatever, unless all the critics of this generation are at fault, that his place in *English* literature, at all events, is safe. The beauty and perfection of many of his earlier lyrics—notably those in his early volume, "The Wind among the Reeds" (1899) are as obvious as the same qualities in a rare jewel. They are, like all the best lyrical poetry, the melodious outpourings of a youthful genius, a genius as yet unspoilt by flattery or dimmed by time. It was a heart that hungered after beauty which inspired the mood in which the poet wrote :

"The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong
too great to be told ;
I hunger to build them anew and sit on a
green knoll apart,
With the earth and the sky and the water
remade, like a casket of gold,
For my dreams of your image that blossoms
a rose in the deeps of my heart."

But, despite the accidentals of subjects and place-names, the poetry of Yeats—vehemently as he would deny it—is cast in the English rather than the Irish tradition. It is nearer to Blake than to Mangan. Of his later poetry there is little that can be said beyond this : It is most certainly not Irish, and more often than not it is not poetry.

Associated with Yeats was George Russell, better known as "A.E." His poetry, though at its best very beautiful, is even less in the Irish mode than that of his contemporary. It breathes a love of nature and beauty in a curiously impersonal way. The impression we receive on reading his perfectly-chiselled lyrics is of a mystic world inhabited by beings "who never were on land or sea." But their beauty is undeniable.

A younger poet of the same school, but one who is a law unto himself is James Stephens. A lyric by Stephens could not possibly be mistaken for the work of any other writer. There is an elusive, impish quality informing all his work which springs from a very strange and fanciful personality. Yet he has written one volume which is distinctly in the Irish tradition. This is his "Reincarnations," a book of adaptations from the older Gaelic poets. It contains a very beautiful rendering, worth quoting in full, of O'Rahilly's "Inis Fál" in which the old bard laments the destruction of Irish arts and social life by the English invader :

"Now may we turn aside and dry our tears,
And comfort us, and lay aside our fears,
For all is gone, all comely quality,
All gentleness and hospitality,
All courtesy and merriment is gone ;
Our virtues all are withered every one,
Our music vanished and our skill to sing ;
Now may we quiet us and quit our moan

Nothing is whole that could be broke, no thing
Remains to us of all that was our own."

Even to one who (like the present writer) has only the most superficial knowledge of the Gaelic tongue, it is somehow apparent that in these lines we have the spirit of the older poem wonderfully preserved.

Of the same period is the work of Seumas O'Sullivan and Joseph Campbell, poets of whose work it can be said at once that they are distinctly Irish. Seumas O'Sullivan's lyrics are cast in a delicate mould and are full of an elusive and fleeting beauty, as in :

" I whispered my great sorrow
To every listening sedge ;
And they bent, bowed with my sorrow,
Down to the water's edge.

But she stands and laughs lightly
To see me sorrow so,
Like the light winds that laughing
Across the water go."

Joseph Campbell's verse is more robust. His songs breathe the fine air of the high mountainy places and deal with the men and women the poet has met in his journeyings over highland, bogland and seashore. A certain harshness, even crudeness, is visible in some of his work, but at his best it is very beautiful. " The Old Woman " is worth quoting :

" As a white candle
In a holy place,
So is the beauty
Of an aged face.

As the spent radiance
Of a winter sun,
So is a woman
With her travail done.

Her brood gone from her
And her thoughts as still
As the waters
Under a ruined mill."

Four women poets who must be reckoned with in any account of present-day Irish poetry are Dora Sigerson, Ethna Carbery, Susan Mitchell and Katharine Tynan. Of these, the poems of Ethna Carbery are, perhaps, the best known, and her songs and ballads pulsate with the spirit of Gaelicism. Few writers have recaptured so finely the spirit of the old hero-lays and few have given us such beautiful pictures of the kindly Irish civilisation she loved so well. Ireland was to her always, indeed, a land of many sorrows, but yet a land ever-youthful and buoyant with the hope of a new dawn-time near at hand. Listen to her lovely " Sláinte na h-Eireann " :

" O wind-drifted Branch, lift your head to the sun,
For the sap of your life in your veins hath begun,
And a little young bud of the tenderest green,
Mine eyes through the snow and the sorrow have seen.

O little green bud, break and blow into flower,
Break and blow through the welcome of sunshine and shower ;
'Twas a long night and dreary you hid there forlorn,
But now the cold hills wear the radiance of morn!

And there will be joy in our hearts since you bring
A whisper of Hope and a promise of spring
A spring that is fairer for long waiting years,
And a hope that is dearer because of our tears."

I wish it were possible to give some appreciation of the work of Katharine Tynan and Dora Sigerson, but the exigencies of space forbid. Examples are to be found in every English anthology of modern poetry, a fact which brings home to us— with somewhat melancholy emphasis—the thought that these poems, instinct as they are with love of Ireland, are better known to the average Englis-

man than they are to us. Space must be found, however, for Susan Mitchell's precious little poem of Christmastide, " The Child in the Manger " :

" His presence set the skies aflame
As through the glittering zones He came,
The Heavenly Child as He swept by
Snatched one bright bauble from the sky.
The Magi watched the heavens afar,
Saw in the blue a starry stranger ;
But He whose playthings planets are
Lay innocently in the manger."

I have left to the last a consideration of the poets of the Anglo-Irish war, the poets who are without doubt nearest to the hearts of the present generation of Irish men and women, and who by the great epic poem of their final sacrifice have left an undying source of inspiration for the generations to come. Padraic Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett signed their work with their blood, the final and abiding test of sincerity. And sincerity is the life-breath of poetry. As Father Brown has said beautifully in his introduction to Pearse's Collected Works : " Generations of Irishmen yet to be born will come to the reading of this book as to a kind of *Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum*, a journey to the realisation of Ireland. Pearse's name and deeds will be taught by mothers to their children long before the time when they will be learned in school histories." We may add to this the hope that not only will his life and death be made a familiar theme to our children and our children's children, but that the pure and passionate utterances in poetry of that white-souled patriot will also become the familiar matter of their early reading. Let them be made acquainted with his every mood, for there is a high radiant beauty in everything he wrote, whether it be the mood of sorrowful foreboding as in this :

" Children with bare feet upon the sands
Of some ebbed sea, or playing in the streets
Of little towns in Connacht,
Things young and happy.
And then my heart hath told me :
These will pass,
Will pass and change, will die and be no more,
Things bright and green, things young and happy ;
And I have gone upon my way
Sorrowful."

Or in the mood of spiritual exaltation as when he addresses his countrymen :

" I say to my people that they are holy, that they are august despite their chains,
That they are greater than those that hold them and stronger and purer,
That they have but need of courage, and to call on the name of God,
God the unforgetting, the dear God that loves the peoples
For whom He died naked, suffering shame."

The work of Thomas MacDonagh, though more classical in its perfection—the result, no doubt of his specialised study of the Elizabethan poets—than that of Pearse, never rises to the same height of spiritual beauty. But no future collection of Irish verse will be complete without examples of some of his best work. I will not attempt to appraise the poetry of Joseph Plunkett—the Irish Francis Thompson. I will simply quote one short lyric, knowing that it will send all who love the beautiful written word on an eager quest for more :

" White dove of the wild dark eyes,
Faint silver flutes are calling
From the night where the star-mists rise
And fire-flies falling
Tremble in starry wise,
Is it you they are calling?

White dove of the beating heart
Shrill golden reeds are thrilling
In the woods where the shadows start,
While moonbeams, filling
With dreams the floweret's heart
Its dreams are thrilling.

White dove of the folded wings
Soft purple night is crying
With the voice of fairy things
For you, lest dying
They miss your flashing wings,
Your splendorous flying.''

With the poets of Easter Week we must inevitably associate two poets who, though they died '' on far foreign fields '' in the service of a foreign king, yet loved Ireland with a burning love and died in the sincere belief that they were fighting Ireland's battle. Francis Ledwidge and Tom Kettle were genuine poets and their country cherishes them though they wore the khaki and not the green. Indeed, poor Ledwidge has left us a testimony of how his heart thrilled when the echoes of the guns of Easter week mingled with the thunder of the bigger guns on the far-off battlefield where the '' Blackbird Poet '' of the Boyne Valley was destined to sing his last song :

'' Louder than a cricket's wing
All night long their hammer's glee
Times the merry songs they sing
Of Ireland glorious and free.
So I heard Joseph Plunkett say—
You know he heard them but last May.

. . . .

And I, myself, have often heard
Their singing as the stars went by,
For am I not of those who reared
The banner of old Ireland high
From Dublin town to Turkey's shores
And where the Vardar loudly roars? ''

I fear I have already exceeded the space at my disposal, and this must be my apology to those who will find many names—Padraic Colum, Richard Rowley, Alice Milligan, Austin Clarke, Peter MacBrien, Brian O'Higgins, to name but a few—missing from this sketch of present-day Irish poets. And even with these omissions the field is so large that it has been impossible to do more than take a passing glance at each name and to quote something which may help to create in the reader an appetite for more. If I succeed in doing this I feel that I shall have been well rewarded. Poetry and all that it stands for should be as much part of our lives as the more material things of civilisation. Indeed, without poetry there can be said to be no civilisation in the truest sense of the word. Let us then cherish and treasure our poets—as they were cherished and treasured in the golden days when the bard held the place of honour next to the High King—let us buy their beautiful and inspired songs instead of wasting our shillings on the imported garbage of the English gutter-presses. Let no man think he can call himself educated who is not familiar with all the best things our native singers have written, who does not know by heart such lyrical gems as Yeats's '' Song of Wandering Aengus,'' Colum's '' Cradle Song,'' or Katharine Tynan's '' All of an April Morning.'' Perhaps at the outset I insisted too strongly on holding a distinction between those who did not. That is not of paramount importance at all at the present time. The great thing to be aimed at is to try and get our people to read the poets and to buy their books. Our publishers could develop this taste for fine reading were they to put cheap and attractive anthologies of modern Irish poetry on the market. Of a similar anthology published in England a few years ago over half-a-million copies have been sold. A tenth of this number sold here would repay an enterprising publisher many times over. The publishers will tell us that we are not a reading race. This is only a half-truth at best, and I am convinced that the more peaceful conditions upon which we are now entering will help enormously to divert the energy which has been expended so lavishly in other directions towards the paths of light and learning. If only we agree to let the poet be our guide and take our hand, our country will no longer be '' a dark patch upon the earth,'' for he will lead us out of the valley of darkness on to the high hills of beauty and culture.

NEW YEAR HOPES AND JOYS.

By PATRICK WALSHE, B.A.

THE New Year dawns at a happy moment, during the joys and exultation of Christmas, when mankind is most amenable, most hopeful and reverent. It becomes part of the great Festival, an extension of Christian gladness, an anniversary blessed and ennobled by a triumphant Catholicism. The New Year receives a princely welcome, bells and carillons filling the air with their joyful chimes, choirs filling the churches with their noble Latin hymns, and sirens broadcasting their happy music from all the vessels in bays and harbours. The opening year has always been impressive and inspiring, suggesting another fall of the curtain in the drama of Life, a fresh brightening of the horizon, a vast encouraging clearance.

It meets with a cheerful greeting from poets who " ring out the old, ring in the new," and wish that human happiness would increase with the flight of time. Men, on the other hand, with the tender thoughtfulness of a Longfellow, do not forget the parting guest and sing a Requiem for the dying year.

" Through woods and mountain-passes
The winds, like anthems, roll ;
They are chanting solemn Masses,
Singing : ' Pray for this poor soul,
Pray—pray.'

There he stands in the foul weather
The foolish, fond Old Year,
Crowned with wild flowers and with heather
Like weak, despised Lear,
A King—a King! "

The New Year is now part of a grand tradition, and cheers the world with a recurrence of hallowed customs and ceremonies. It comes with no puritannical solemnity, with no sullen brooding over ill-spent time, but with a joyous invitation that encourages languishing hopes. Like a worthy guest, it seems to urge us to make another venture, to build not merely castles in the air but solid beautiful castles on the earth. All fears and disappointments, all obstacles seem to vanish from the broad arena of life, and shining prizes placed conspicuously in our view, as in the heroic days of Aeneas, tempt, persuade and compel a renewal of our efforts. The New Year has the inspiration of a fresh suggestion, of a fresh beginning, and the optimism that tends to raise us to higher levels. Looking into the coming year, that has always an alluring fascination for the alert and the sanguine, we hope to come nearer to our ideals, to give some contribution to the world's progress and happiness. Like birthday anniversaries, the New Year exercises a quickening influence and renews our enthusiasm for all the interests of Life. We feel the need of being more vigilant, more earnest and determined in our pursuits, in the effort to reach the joys we longed for.

The New Year is always welcomed and honoured. The Catholic Church has made it a Feast-day, and surrounded it with the glories of her ritual and the splendours of her ceremonial. People delight in going to Mass on New Year's morning, when the frost has cleared the air or the snow has covered the earth with an immaculate robe. They like to hear the music and the hymns which down through the ages have greeted the first morn of the opening year. They realize how wisely the Church gives her blessing to the dawn of a new era, and go home happy and comforted. Throughout the day the spirit of joy and festivity dominates. Like Christmas, the New Year draws men more closely together, and endows home with greater charms and attrac-

tions. It brings about a renewal of friendship and an interchange of greetings between those at home and their relatives separated by the broad Atlantic. It reinforces the good-will of Christmas and becomes another golden link in the great chain binding men with their Maker. The New Year can awaken very serious thought—it can, and does, arouse mankind to a clearer consciousness of its destiny, to the necessity for a truly satisfactory ambition, for co-operating with God in making His creation a success.

Nodlaig na Leanbai.

Ni raib fios aca me beit ag éisteacht leo ag caint agus ag cur sios ar an Nodlaig, agus is maith an scéal é. Dá mbeadh fios ag aon duine amháin aca go raib duine fásta in aice leo, is beag cainte déanfaidis. Bíonn scáth mar sin ar páistiú roimh daoine móra, agus ní haon iongnadh é. Ni tuigeann na daoine móra na daoine beaga de ghnáth, agus cuireann siad náire agus ceann-fé orra nuair a neósann siad eachtraí na leanb agus na leanbai féin ag éisteacht. Pé scéal é bí an ceathrar so ag caint go brioghmar agus bíos féin ag eisteacht leo.

"Ni fada uainn an Nodlaig anois" arsa Nóra, agus ghlondar 'na súilib, "is fearr liom an Nodlaig ná aon trát eile den bliain. An fearr leat-sa í, a Máirín?"

"Is fearr, go deimhin," adubairt Máirín, go deas, mall, réid, "cé go dtaitnean gach trát liom."

"Cad 'na thaob gur fearr lib an Nodlaig?" arsa Diarmuid, agus mion-gáire air.

"Is fearr liom-sa í" arsa Nóra, "mar bíonn nios mó péirini agus nios mó milseáin agus nios mó cisti deasa le fáil agam ná aon uair eile."

"Is tú an giocaire is mó in Éirinn, a Nóra" arsa Pádraig, a dhiteár.

"An é sin an fáth go dtaitnean an Nodlaig leat-sa, a Máirín?" arsa Diarmuid.

"Well, is maith liom péirini agus milseáin agus cisti deasa, gan aon amhras," arsa Máirín, "ach ni mar gheall ar na rudaí súd a bíonn an Nodlaig comh taitneamhach san. Ni féidir liom é a mhiniú, ach nuair a bíonn an Nodlaig ag druidim linn, tagan síothán iongantach áluinn isteach 'mo chroidhe, agus is cuma cad a deirtear liom nó cad a deintear dom chun feirge do chur orm, fanann an spiorad sin 'mo chroidhe agus 'mo aigne, agus bím sásta le gach nid is le gach duine. Ni bím mar sin aon uair eile i rith na bliana, agus sin é an fáth gur fearr liom an Nodlaig."

"Díreach!" arsa Diarmuid, "agus sin é an fáth gur fearr le Nóra í, leis, ach ni ceapann sí gur b'é. 'Sé an spiorad sin i gcroidhthe daoine a scaipeann na péirini agus na milseáin agus na cártai agus na rudaí deasa go léir a scaiptear um Nodlaig. Dubairt an máighistir linn inné gur b'é sin spiorad na Nodlag, spiorad na síothcána, spiorad an charadais, nach féidir a mhiniú ná a thuigsint. Cuireann Dia isteach i gcroidhe gach éinne é le linn Nodlag agus athruigeann sé an saol go léir dúinn."

"Is dócha gur fíor é" arsa Pádraig, "mar bíonn athrú ar an uile dhuine nuair a thagan an Nodlaig. Daoine ná labhann lena chéile i rith na bliana bíonn siad comh cáirdeamhal le leanbai aimsir na Nodlag, agus thabharfaidis aon nid d'á chéile."

"Ni fheadar cad fé ndear é," arsa Nóra, "nior chuimhnigeas riamh air go dtí anois."

"Sé fosaghán a thagan ar an saol arís" arsa Máirín, "agus a théidean timpal agus a leagan lámh i gan fios ar an uile dhuine san domhain gur annsa leis Dia, agus a cuirean spiorad na Nodlag isteach 'na chroidhe."

"Beid Nodlaig níos deise ná riamh feasta," arsa Nóra, agus deora átais 'na súilib.

MUIRIS NA MÓNA.

TO A PASSIONIST.

Clad in a vestment wrought with passion
flowers :
Celebrant of one Passion : called by name
Passionist : is thy world one world with ours?
Thine, a like heart? Thy very soul the
same?

Thou pleadest an eternal sorrow : we
Praise the still changing beauty of this
earth.
Passionate good and evil thou dost see :
Our eyes behold the dreams of death and
birth.

We love the joys of men : we love the dawn,
Red with the sun, and with the pure dew
pearled ;
Thy stern soul feels, after the sun withdrawn,
How much pain goes to perfecting the
world.
Canst thou be right? Is thine the very truth?
Stands then our life in so forlorn a state?
Nay, but thou wrongest us ; thou wrongest
our youth,
Who dost our happiness compassionate.

And yet! and yet! O Royal Calvary!
Whence divine sorrow triumphed thro' years
past ;
Could ages bow before mere memory?
These passion-flowers must blossom to the
last.

Purple they bloom, the splendour of a king :
Crimson they bleed, the Sacrament of
Death :
About our thrones and pleasances they cling,
Where guilty eyes read what each blossom
saith.

LIONEL JOHNSON.

NODHLAIG.

Shivering 'midst the crude, rough straw
A little Babe doth lie,
The lowly ox and gentle ass
Beside It standing by.

Oh, glorious little Iosagan,
Within the manger cold,
The splendours of the whole wide world
Within Thy small hands hold.

No shadow of a coming Cross
Doth dim Thy happy Face ;
Thy Mother's crooning lullaby
So full of saintly grace.

Thy Foster-Father's tender care,
So pure and undefiled,
His heart a glow of love and joy
Beside Thee, little Child.

The Sultan and the great wise men
To kiss Thy little Feet,
To win a greeting smile from Thee
Do deem it ever sweet.

The might of kings to Thee is nought,
The brightest gold—a lure—
Both but an atom and a thrall
That never can endure.

Thine Eyes the sun and moon surpass,
Thy gentle Voice hath power
To save the erring soul of man
Within its darkest hour.

Oh, wondrous little *Iosagán*,
Gaze on our Eire now,
And ease the sorrowing heart of her
And soothe the troubled brow!

LILIAN M. NALLY.

CHRISTMAS DAY AND ST. STEPHEN'S DAY—CONTRAST AND BALANCE.

By the Rev. MICHAEL PALMER, C.P.

THE contrast is apparently almost laid outside the quiet little village, perfect. In one feast, the scene is Bethlehem ; in the other, outside the capital city, Jerusalem. The first picture is dark, for it is midnight ; the other is bright with the glare of day. The cave, though rough, is compact ; the open country outside Jerusalem appears very spacious in the clear air and under the blue sky of the East. Angels hover around the cave ; men, not angels, hold that patch of ground beyond the city walls. Here angel-voices sing : " Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good-will " ; there gruff and shrieking human voices rend the air : a human mob howls for the blood of a martyr. And the Word made flesh, the God-Babe, lies in a manger in the first hours of His beautiful human life ; while the strong man is stretched on the ground, lifeless, without beauty, pommelled to death with stones.

The two feasts are, indeed, at first sight, a perfect contrast : to-day : peace, adoration, joy, divine life ; to-morrow : strife, blasphemy, sorrow, blood, death.

Nevertheless, Holy Church can quite consistently place them side by side in her calendar. The Great Mother can, on one day, like the Gospel woman, rejoice that a man has been born into the world—the God-Man ; on the next, she can weep bitterly over the death of her first-born martyr. For the Church's liturgy is the outward expression of her infallibly consistent, broad, divine teaching. It does not recoil at superficial contrasts; it never borrows colour from cheap, topical allusions ; it is ever the liturgy of a divine Church primarily independent of the trend of human affairs ; a reflex of the wide treasures of divine knowledge. The Church turns to the Sacred Volume and with her singular, unerring prerogative, balances and reconciles apparently violent contrasts.

If angels thronged around the cave at Bethlehem, at least Stephen, outside the city walls, had " the face of an angel " (Acts vi., 15). If the Holy Ghost had overshadowed Mary and " the Word was made flesh," the zealous young deacon was " full of the Holy Ghost " (Acts vii., 55). If the Divine Babe lay peacefully in the manger He was the same Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day and for ever ; and the martyr, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw Him standing on the right hand of God (Acts vii., 55). As the Divine Child of Bethlehem, having grown to divine manhood, had prayed on the cross : " Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," His words were echoed by St. Stephen : " Lord, lay not this sin to their charge " (Acts vii., 59). As the Crucified had cried out with a loud voice : " Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit " ; the martyr cried : " Lord Jesus, receive my spirit " (Acts vii., 58).

Bethlehem—peace ; Jerusalem—persecution. Blessed are peace and the peacemakers ; but blessed also are persecutions and those suffering for justice sake. Bethlehem—the winsome Christ-Child ; Jerusalem—bloodshed : but the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians, other beautiful, tiny images of Christ. Bethlehem—life ; Jerusalem—death : but he that loses his life for Christ's sake, saves it.

. . . . . .

A strange religious system ; a most unbalanced ritual ; repugnant to human

nature and common sense ; reactionary and unsuited to the ideas of modern progress. So the superficial, unthinking worldling may pronounce judgment on the teaching and practice of the Church. But the thoughtful men without the gift of true Faith have, from a human point of view, extolled the supernatural theory and practice of the true Church. If I were to belong to any religion, I would be a Catholic : its system is not strange but quite natural ; it attempts to restore the balance in human nature ; it perseveres with unearthly courage to preserve that balance in season and out of season, in peace and war, in joy and sorrow, in every country and in every age : in fact, but for the Catholic Church the world would have gone mad long ago. Such types have, with the light of reason, recognised that there is something wrong in human nature, a condition which those of the Faith term the fallen state of our nature. They realize that by nature, all are inclined to extremism of various types, good and bad. The bad tendencies are, of course, in the majority, the stronger. Yet, even with natural intelligence, men have learned that virtue, in the long run, is preferable to vice ; that temperance is really more enjoyable than passion ; that surfeit of joy is, in fact, only veiled sorrow. They have been convinced that man's constitution is totally unfitted to extremism and that his well-being, even from a natural standpoint, consists in a judicious balancing of the various interests in human life. Even a man's temporal salvation must be worked out by a blending of joy and sorrow, of self-restraint and relaxation. How far such men reduce their knowledge to practice is quite another matter : the Spirit of God breathes where He wills. Yet they are at least forced to admit the profound, age-long, broad, consistent wisdom of the Church which so clearly expounds this knowledge, in religious terms, primarily in view of her children's external salvation.

It is very helpful to us Catholics born to the true Faith to look down at times from the supernatural plane and to examine on this point the human, rational parallel to the teaching of the Church in natural life. It is beneficial to realize that similar principles govern the development both of a perfect man and of a practical Christian and Catholic. Such reflection will help us to appreciate more exactly the wonderfully reasonable method of salvation expounded by Jesus Christ through His Church.

If Holy Church wishes us to contemplate Bethlehem and Jerusalem, birth and death, joy and sorrow, on consecutive days, we can consider the exhortation quite reasonable, not merely from our direct knowledge of the supernatural life but from our experience of everyday life which, if well-ordered, necessarily involves work and leisure, the vision of beauty and ugliness, endeavour and rest, joy and sorrow. A superfluity of either element would be positively unnatural ; we would not be sane or whole men. If to-day we are to watch the first signs of life and to-morrow cruel death, we can look below the surface and see the modulating and co-ordinating power of Divine Love in both. Here is newly incarnate Divine Love itself ; there is its highest expression in a creature : similarly, true human love finds expression in life and death. Again, if we are not simply to rest in a pleasing, emotional contemplation of Divine Love in the Incarnate God but likewise to view It translated into action in a creature, the Church, unlike some of the sects and individual human religionists, is very reasonable ; for in human affairs men, too, recognise the possible gulf between idealism and realism, between theory and practice, between the mentality of the few and the multitude. Though the Divine Child has just begun to live and St. Stephen has just died, yet we can again look below the surface and see the unity of power made strong in infirmity :—the omnipotent God as an infant lying in a human manger and the strong man stretched helpless, beneath stones: men have also realized that there are many

human things stronger than brute force.

. . . . . .

Hereafter, in a new order of creation, all such complexities shall have passed away. There will be no faith or hope, but only love ; no yesterdays or to-morrows in the mansions of God to Whom a thousand years are as one day ; no midnight or mid-day, for He Himself is the Eternal Light ; no tears or bloodshed, but eternal love ; no apparent contrasts, for there will not be the shadow of unorderly vicissitude ; no necessity for balance or modulation, for we shall be confirmed in glory.

Meanwhile, we must work out that salvation according to the decrees of that same God speaking so supernaturally and naturally through His Church.

WEAK BACKS. A DISEASE COMMON TO MANY CATHOLICS

By HAMILTON CRAIGIE.

IF one were to tell a professing Catholic that he was a spineless invertebrate in matters of religion, he would naturally be indignant ; in fact, one may safely advance the opinion that he would find it a rather difficult thing to turn the other cheek.

And since these are the observations of a layman with neither the official authority nor the desire to preach a sermon, they must be taken as such, " with malice toward none, and with charity toward all."

Statistics are not available as to the actual number of professing Catholics who manifest this undevotional symptom, or who may be said to suffer from this spinal weakness, but one finds them at Mass any Sunday morning, on their knees, indeed, but—and it must be chronicled with regret—mostly sitting down.

The Mass usually is a matter of a half hour or less. As a mark of respect during this transient interval of a half hour, say, once a week, one might suppose that the professing Catholic would kneel at least as he was intended to kneel, in a devotional attitude, upon his knee—not upon his spine.

For, to the writer, not observing the mote in his neighbour's eye to the exclusion of the beam in his own, there is something not merely irreverent in this very common practice, but a something connoting a corresponding mental attitude of downright inattention, laxity, a mere toleration of his obligation to hear Mass.

Frequently enough—and the writer recalls it with shame—as a student at several of our representative Catholic colleges, it was the practically universal custom at daily Mass so to recline, at ease, throughout the Sacrifice ; even, and this may as well apply to present-day conditions, to snatch, vulgarly speaking, forty winks at one time or another, inaudibly or otherwise!

This appears to be reprehensible enough in Catholic youth, but one cannot find an excuse for it in adults pledged to the observance of their religious duties, with, as one might imagine, some measure of awesome understanding of the Mass and all that it implies.

Respect and reverence and veneration can scarcely be associated with the common practice of kneeling-sitting down. To bend the knee is the first and the most significant symbol of man's recognition of his Creator. To slouch down in one's seat, bury one's head in one's arms, perhaps to remain oblivious, physically and spiritually, to the ineffable Sacrifice proceeding there " on the high altar, gleaming chastely-white "—ah, what a sight is that, my brothers!

Appreciation of the Mass would make one regard assisting at it a privilege and not a perfunctory fulfilling of an obligation. Perhaps the idea of obligation comes before that

of privilege in our thought of the Mass.

The genuflector who performs his act of devotion as if he were doing a new jig-step, or borrowing a variation of the latest jazz is not so culpable, by far, as the weak-backed individual who hears Mass, if he is not asleep during the ceremony, with a minimum of devotion and a maximum of undignified ease. Surely, were such a one to bend the knee before any earthly sovereign he would not perform his devoirs in anything approximating the manner of his attitude at Holy Mass.

And yet, Sunday after Sunday one sees this same weak-backed, spineless, and indifferent posture time and again, so that a congregation thus almost universally engaged will appear from the rear mostly as a collection of turtles, and everybody knows that a turtle has very little regard for the amenities, to say nothing of a devotion to the Mass.

We are so constituted, body and soul, that a reverent external posture is a positive aid to interior devotion and the reverent control of our thoughts and affections.

Lastly, the weak-backs may be good men and women, good Christians, good Catholics, just a little careless, possibly just a little lazy, but while they persevere in this, as one might say, Mohammedan posture, they do not edify —rather the reverse.

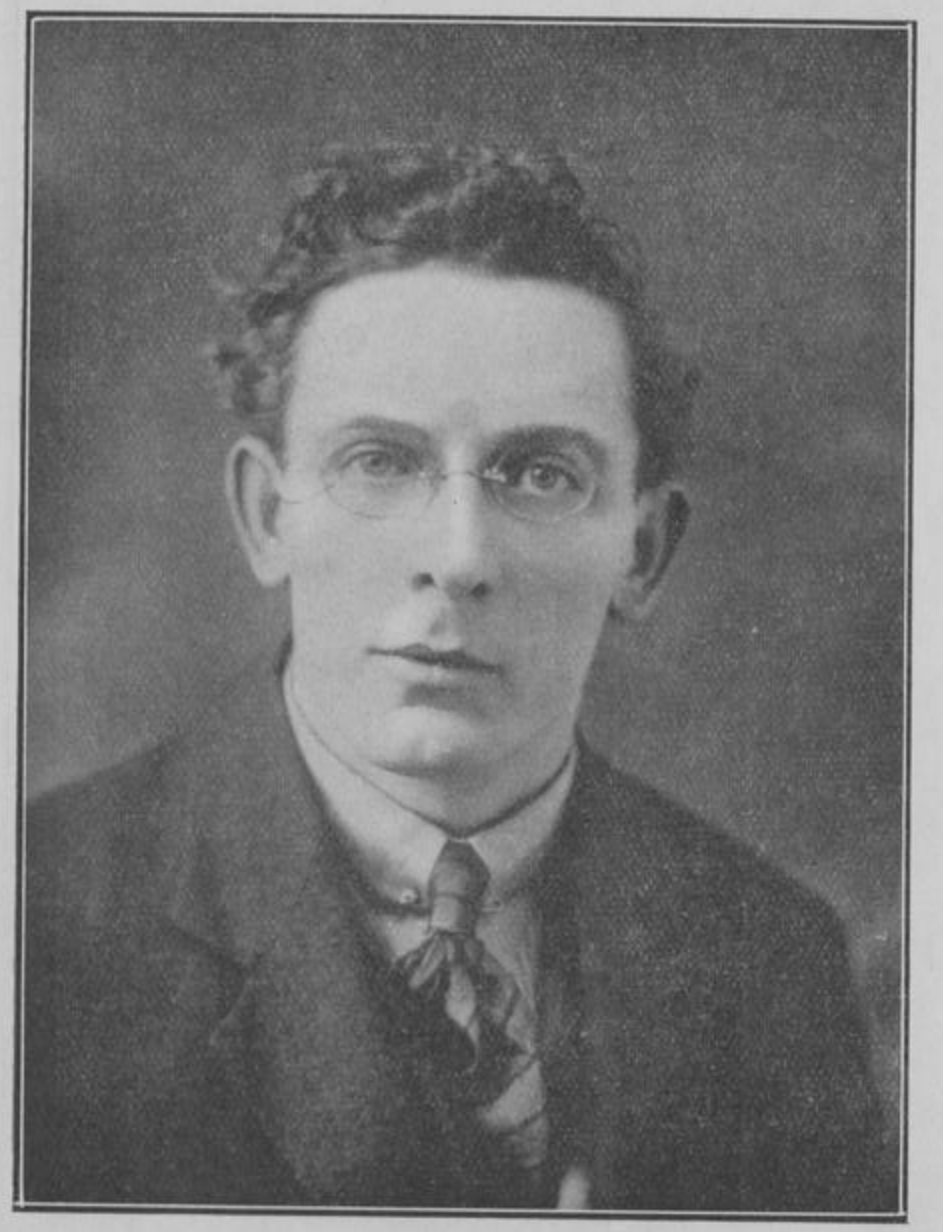
Let us, therefore, kneel straightforwardly, in an attitude and in a posture pleasing both to God and to man ; let us, eschewing the temptation to take our ease, hew to the line, let the chips fall where they may. Let us be *upright!*

THE CASE OF THOMPSON.

B. SQUARE.

THOMPSON (we will call him that for convenience) is a Catholic young man in the middle twenties. He is known as a " regular fellow," a " mixer," an awful " good scout." He likes to sit in for a little game of poker, especially on a Saturday night, and often the game continues until very early Sunday morning. Then Thompson can just about " make " the last Mass ; sometimes he dozes through most of it. There were a few drinks " on the side," and Thompson is pretty much " all in." He also " steps out " once in a while with people known as " wild women," and congratulates himself that he " gets away " with it. Under the circumstances, Thompson cannot " see " at all the practice of approaching the Sacraments once a month. He might go with the Sodality every three months, but he doesn't belong. He doesn't want to bother with the parish societies ; doesn't want to get mixed up with these things if he can help it. He hasn't the time or the inclination—just yet. There will be plenty of opportunity later on, when he marries and settles down, for Thompson means to marry some day, but she must be a " peach," and her father must have lots of " jack." Thompson isn't sure whether she'll have to be Catholic or not—these things can be arranged, you know. And so it goes.

Some nights Thompson takes in a show. He isn't particular whether the " show " is clean or smutty, and as there as so many of the latter, he rather likes one with " pep " and " spice "—everybody's doing it. Deep down in his heart he knows they are the kind of shows his mother would not approve of. And he knows, too, as he goes along day by day, night after night, that he isn't quite the son his mother thinks he is. But he feels it will all come out right by and by. He will have a good time while it lasts. The Commandments of God and the Church are all right, as far as they go, but " you can't be too fussy these days, and anyhow—." Well, he is a " regular fellow," and he lives up to the term in every



M. J. McMANUS.

VERY REV. BONIFACE CONNOLLY, C.P.

Contributors to "The Cross Annual," whose photographs did not appear last year.

ST. GABRIEL'S GUILD.—PRIZEWINNERS, 1924.

[Photo by Keogh Bros.]

Maureen Daly
(Dublin).

Pattie Shelley
(Dublin).

Mary O'Byrne
(Dublin).

Margaret Goudie
(Washington, U.S.A.).

Nina Browne
(Listowel).

Mary J. McManus
(Enniskillen).

E'bhlin Ni Mheadhra
(Athy).

Nelly Anderton
(St. Helen's, England)

Vera Wickens
(St. Helen's, England)

Philomena McMahon
(Dublin).

Lily Quirk
(London).

Felim Kelly
(Dublin).

Pauline de Blea
(London).

Kitty Sasse
(London).

respect. The girls of the parish see him at times at the last Mass ; they know his name —they know him by sight and that is all. They rather like his clean-cut appearance, and if the truth were known, several of them would like to know him better. But, alas, Thompson never " mixes " with the girls in the parish. It would give the " old ladies " of the neighbourhood too much chance to gossip. He will " play safe." He will " mix up " only with girls in other sections of the city,—the farther away tbe better. And as for the " wild women—." Well, he is sure that is his own little affair, and no one is the wiser.

Listen, Thompson, old scout. As soon as you began to live, you were in training to die. Are you keeping fit for the final round? No time like the present, you know. What the world " winks at " to-day was wrong a thousand years ago, and more. Cut out the " camouflage," and get down to the brass tacks of a Catholic life—the life of a practical Catholic young man! Get into the swim with those who have the real Catholic spirit. " Play safe " in the true meaning of the phrase. Join the Sodality or some other parish organization, and go to Communion with the boys regularly. If you can go every three months, you will find you can go every month. Check up the inventory with your conscience, and see how you stand! " Mix up " with the girls of the parish ; get acquainted with the parish priest, or his assistant. You will find they are also " regular fellows," but of another kind. A little game of poker is all right, but " lay off " at the proper time, and get some sleep. You will feel better in body and in spirit. You can't keep on fooling Nature all the time. Go to High Mass and hear a good sermon. Join the choir, if you can sing. Be a worker in some activity of the parish. Faith without good works, you know, is dead. Cut out the " wild women," and the " smutty " shows. They are the sharpest tools that Satan wields to-day. And, remember, Thompson, it is a grand and glorious feeling to " turn in " at night after saying your prayers, with the feeling that, should you by accident—and accidents are quite numerous nowadays—pass into the life beyond sometime during the night, you could do so knowing that your soul was free from mortal stain, and that you could meet God face to face with joy and satisfaction. Now then, Thompson, are you ready? Let's go!

ST. STEPHEN.

J. CORSON MILLER.

St. Stephen's eyes were friendly,
He bore a blameless heart in his breast,
But the stones of the pagans crushed him down,
To die with a martyr's crest.
He laid him down in his youthful blood,
In Christ to rest.

St. Stephen's words were kindly,
His hands were raised to aid and bless ;
But the hate of the pagans rose like a wind
Against the flame of his loveliness.
And now, St. Stephen, I make a prayer,
And to thee I confess ;
I would press my heart to thy blameless heart
And touch my hand to thy stainless hand,
That I, like thee, might walk through life,
And be one of God's chosen band.
For the fires of sin still scour the earth,
By a wind of hatred fanned.

And, O St. Stephen, when once my days
Unwind at last to a certain end,
Cast then on me thy blamless eyes,
And on my faltering steps attend.
I pray with me thou'lt walk beside,
And hail me " friend."

BOOK REVIEWS.

"The Little Book of Christmas." By BRIAN O'HIGGINS. Also **"Six Christmas Verse Cards,"** by the same. Published at "Stormanstown," Glasnevin, Dublin.

An Appreciation.

As Christmas is once again drawing near, with the usual question of "What gift shall I send to my friend?" we gladly bring to the notice of our readers a new booklet containing sacred Christmas poems by Brian O'Higgins. The author needs no introduction, as some of his poems have already appeared on Christmas cards "all breathing the peace and love and beauty of Christmas," giving to them a value beyond that generally attached to them as an ordinary remembrance for friendship's sake.

The new publication is the realisation of the hope entertained by many that Mr. O'Higgins would compile some of his Yuletide poems in book form. Indeed, it is more than this, for the compilation is that of his newest works. "The Little Book of Christmas" "contains fourteen poems, with illustrated art cover," and is most suitable as a somewhat novel form of gift to persons of all ages and climes. The price, sixpence, makes it exceptionally good value.

The author of the aforesaid booklet has also published six Verse Cards on which are his newest "touching verses of a real Christmas and religious nature that will be welcomed by all." The price of each being the modest sum of one penny, they are, therefore, within the means of everyone, and are "specially suitable for sending with books or any Christmas gifts."

We trust that those who read this little appreciation of these publications will spread their circulation by procuring them for their own use, and being satisfied with the purchase (as we feel sure they will be) will mention them to others. W.B.

"The Little Flower Calendar, 1925." Published by the Carmelite Fathers, Clarendon Street, Dublin. Price 2d.

Many, no doubt, are the calendars published annually, nor are those which are essentially Catholic few in number, but it would be difficult to find one of a more serviceable nature, replete with various practical notes and information, than the above-named publication. "This Calendar aims at helping the faithful in the observance of the ecclesiastical feasts, and at fostering devotion to Blessed Teresa ('The Little Flower'). Although it gives prominence to Carmelite devotions, it contains all the devotions popular in Ireland, and it includes all the important Irish Saints."

It is astounding that such an amount of ignorance exists among the laity as to the feasts of the Church. Excuses are brought forward to the effect that such matters are reserved for priests and religious, but that they are outside the sphere of the "every-day Catholic." This is a fallacy. An interest in the festivals of the Church is a most practical way of increasing a love of Christ and His Church in the Catholic soul. One can see how helpful a Catholic Calendar is to keep one conversant with the festivals, day by day. Besides the list of daily feasts, the *Little Flower Calendar* contains notes for each month, a syllabus of the indulgences to be gained, a paragraph on the "Devotion of the Month," and quotations from the autobiography of "The Little Flower."

We wish this publication that very wide circulation which, from every point of view, it deserves.—W.B.

"Gaelic Pioneers of Christianity," The Work and Influence of Irish Monks and Saints in Continental Europe. (VI.—XII. Cent.) By Dom LOUIS GOUGAUT, O.S.B. 150 pp. Price 7/6.

It is extraordinary what an amount of accurate and genuinely historical information can be compressed into a volume of some 150 pages. This fact is borne out in the above-named publication. There is always a danger that the illustrious "Gaelic Pioneers of Christianity" and their work in other lands may become almost forgotten, while their names may remain but an indefinite memory of the ages that are past, The names, for instance, of Columban, Gall, Fursa, and Brendan are more or less familiar to all students of Catholicism, especially to such as are Irish, but how few know of the great achievements of these saints. Dom Gougaut's work brings before the reader an abundance of historical facts relating to the lives of these Gaelic missioners, not to mention a dissertation on the "Three Great National Saints," Patrick, Brigid, and Columcille.

Historical books are often found to furnish reading which is justly styled "heavy" and "dry." Such cannot be said of the volume in question. One is, so to speak, "carried along" from chapter to chapter, experiencing in its perusal a healthy charm and fascination. The many references made in the narrative show an enormous amount of research work, while they prove the accuracy of the author's statements.

The work is not confined to the lives and labours of active Gaelic missioners, for the author also introduces the recluses who, by their penances and prayers, spread "the good odour of Christ" in distant lands.

At the present day especially, one expects statements to be backed up by facts. Hence, those who delight in boasting of the influence of Irish saints upon other peoples are expected to bring forward some historical data in proof of their assertions. We do not hesitate to say that a lamentable amount of ignorance exists regarding this matter. Those who are willing to become more conversant with the "Gaelic Pioneers of Christianity" will welcome the classical work of Dom Gougaud.

The second portion of the volume treats of "the place of Irish Saints in Continental religious Folklore" and affords fascinating reading.

We heartily commend this work to all. All will find therein much to engross their thoughts and bring them pleasure as well as fresh knowledge of "the days that have been." The work is, indeed a classical one, and what makes it all the more welcome is the fact that its style is such as will be found suitable for all minds and tastes.

The publishers are M. H. Gill and Son, and this, like their other publications, has been very creditable turned out. W.B.

GUILD OF ST. GABRIEL FOR OUR YOUNG READERS.

By "FRANCIS."

Go mbeirimid beo ar an am so aris! That is an old, old Irish wish, always expressed at Christmas, and the meaning of it is: "May we live until this season comes round again." Right heartily do I send it out through the medium of our own *Annual* to every reader of *The Cross*, young and old, rich and poor, and to it I add the wish that every one of us may be, a year hence, richer in kindness, in patience, in humility and in the love and grace of God.

A year has sped by on swift wings since last we met in the pages of the *Annual*, and the beautiful season of Christmas is coming over the hills to us again—the season of peace and generosity and home happiness and golden memories, of joy and merriment and charity.

The Babe of Bethlehem loves in an especial manner all who are children and childlike in mind and heart, and I am quite sure that any request made to Him by a child is granted. In that belief I ask you all, when you kneel before the Crib on the morning of His Nativity, to beg of Him for all of us, for all the members of the Guild of St. Gabriel and their friends, and for all who help in the good work of which *The Cross* is the herald and the chronicler, every grace and blessing we stand in need of in this life and the happiness of Heaven when this life comes to a close. And if the Child Jesus grants those graces and blessings to us we are sure to be happy.

The Guild of St. Gabriel in "The Cross."

Since the day of its inception, some eleven or twelve eyars ago, the Guild of St. Gabriel, dedicated to the young Passionist Saint, has been a wonderful success, and has been a pleasant link between young people in many lands who may never meet except in its pages. Members come into it and pass out, year after year, some of its first members are now young men and young women, but there is scarcely one, I feel certain, who does not remember with pleasure every hour spent in that sunny corner of *The Cross* over which old *Francis* has the great privilege of presiding.

Three handsome prizes are offered every month, and the lucky winners have the privilege of seeing their photographs in *The Cross Annual*.

Those of our readers who are not members and wish to join should write to *Francis*, Guild of St. Gabriel, *The Cross*, Mount Argus, Dublin. There is a hearty welcome awaiting every girl and boy, and a friendly word from *Francis*.

A Review of the Year.

The Guild of St. Gabriel is an organisation that grows from month to month. Hundreds of new members have come to us during the present year, and very few of those who join forget us completely, even when they have passed over the age limit (10 years) and are no longer eligible to take part in the competitions. They may seem to forget *Francis* and the Guild for a time, but eventually a letter comes along telling how the writer has watched out for *The Cross* every month, and has enjoyed the Guild as keenly as in the days gone by when active membership lent a greater zest to the reading of our monthly chronicle. I doubt if even one member has ever completely forgotten the Guild though, indeed, I regret very much to say that some of our most active and successful members of a few years past never write to us now at all. Very frequently *Francis* hears from our Poet-Laureate, *Lilian Mary Nally*, who is as deeply interested as ever, but no little song comes from her to gladden our hearts as in the old days. Such sweet singers as *Rita Carlos*, *Nina Carlos*, *Nora Ní Chatháin* and such brilliant prose writers as *Proinsias Mac Thighearnáin*, *Mary Rennie* and many others who contributed less frequently, never even let *Francis* know they are still in the land of the living. I should like very much to get a line from each of them before next year's *Annual* is due, and perhaps a short contribution also to appear in these pages. Since the old company passed into the ranks of the grown-ups we seem to have no poets at all in our midst, and it is up to the former singers of the Guild to give us a wee song now and then.

Active Members.

The most active of the senior members during the year has been *Eileen Glynn*, of Sutton Oak, in England, whose letters and essays have been an unfailing source of delight to me. I watch out for them every month and feel a wonderful pleasure in reading them. God leave her always the gift of picturing in simple, beautiful language the beauties and the glories of His creation. Full of pleasure for me also were the grand big batches of letters from a stronghold of the Guild here in Ireland—the *Convent Schools*, *Athy*, Co. Kildare. Thirty and forty letters (nearly all in Irish) have come from the Athy members almost every month, and I have simply revelled in their contents. I suppose the writers think an old fellow like me wouldn't bother his head reading their simple innocent letters, but if they only knew how glad I am to get them, they'd never miss a month. Beannacht an Leinbh Naomhtha orra agus ar a múinteor go deo! The *Convent School*, *Mountrath*, has always been a centre of activity also, and competitors have come from it this year, though not in such large numbers as when *Seosaimhín Nic Chathmhaoil* used lead her forces to the attack, singing sweet and merry songs herself to cheer them on the way. Every little writer from Mountrath will be welcome during the coming year. *Pattie Shelley* is one of the old members who has never failed to write. I am grateful to her for all her sweet messages during the year and for the great work she has done to make the Guild even more popular than it is. A namesake of hers, *Maureen Shelley*, of the Sacred Heart Convent, Ferrybank, Waterford, contributed one or two brilliant essays and a few delightful letters during the year, but then a stiff Matric. exam. claimed all her energies, and Guild work had to cease for the time being. It is a joy to know that she came through the exam. with flying colours. Congratulations to her and to her teachers! I trust there will be several representatives of Ferrybank in the Guild during the coming twelve months. Month by month our sole active member in America, *Margaret Goudie*, has written long, interesting letters, and

once she actually succeeded in walking away with a prize from about a score of competitors. *The Cross* is well known in America and in many other countries as well.

Other Centres.

For years the pupils of the *Presentation Convent, Listowel, Co. Kerry,* have been among the most active and faithful of our members, and hardly a month passes without a letter or a competition paper from the talented girls who are taught there. *Lena Enright* was our great promoter there, but she has grown up and has gone out into the world and we only hear news of her occasionally. Her place has been ably taken by *Nina Browne,* who writes very often and whose letters are always welcome. We had a big influx of members from the *Convent of St. Louis, Kiltimagh,* Co. Mayo, some months ago, but of late they seem to have forgotten the name and address of *Francis.* He is very lonely for a letter from them and hopes to hear good news of them and of their work before Christmas. There's a very big and very clever group of them there and a few at least ought to write to the Headquarters of the Guild of St. Gabriel every month .

Our English Members.

In England there are several very active centres, and one of the best is at *St Helen's,* in Lancashire, where several girls and boys are always spreading the name and fame of the Guild and doing everything in their power to make its influence felt everywhere. Some members in other places find writing letters and composition too tiresome a task, but if they were afflicted as my dear little friend, *Nelly Anderton,* of St. Helen's, is (she has no arms) they might have some excuse. Nelly writes beautifully with a pen held in her toes, and all her letters are prose poems of thanksgiving to God for His goodness to her. Any girl who reads this and who thinks it is a fag to write letters should feel her cheeks grow hot with shame. It is the Nelly Andertons of the world who make life sweet and beautiful, and if we could all bring ourselves to imitate her cheerfulness and humility what a pleasant old world it would be! Another great English centre is *Newton-le-Willows,* in Lancashire, where there is a mighty host of active members and where new ones are being recruited every day. A medal of St. Gabriel is awarded to the boy or girl who brings five new members into the Guild, and several of these medals have gone already to Newtown-le-Willows. I trust many more will find their way there in future, until every boy and girl in the place is a member of the Guild. Another Lancashire centre is at *Bolton,* but I do not hear from the members there as often as I should wish. Perhaps they have been working hard there of late and haven't had time to write, but I'll be on the look-out for a batch of letters in the near future—and some new members as well.

One of the best and busiest centres we have anywhere is situated in *St. John's Girls' School, Islington, London.* Not a single month passes that does not bring a big group of competitors from St. John's, and I am kept regularly informed of all their school activities, their progress in the Schools League, their successes at matches and at exams., until I seem to have known every one of the girls there since I was a little boy going to school myself—and that's a longer time than I'd care to say. They are always bright and hopeful, and that accounts for their many successes in the school as well as on the field of play.

Dublin's Own.

In *Dublin,* of course, we have many members, scattered here and there all over the city, and they manage to hold their own against all comers, and carry off a goodly share of the prizes. Some of them do not write as frequently as they might, but very many of the others make up for this and I am quite proud of the Dublin members. I trust each one of them will endeavour during the winter months to recruit at least one new member each, so that the Guild of St. Gabriel may be as strong as in any other part of the world. I'll be looking out for a big rush of Dublin recruits.

Up North.

Up North we have some good members, like *Florence Wilson* and *Mary J. McManus,* of Enniskillen, and *Seán Duibhne,* of Tirconnaill, but we should have far more members in Ulster. There used to be a goodly number of members in Belfast City, but they all have grown up and passed on, without troubling to get anybody to take their places. If there is any energetic schoolboy or schoolgirl in Belfast reading these lines at this moment I sincerely trust he or she will set out immediately to recruit as many young people as possible and get them to write a little note to *Francis,* asking to be admitted to membership of the Guild. There's a welcome here for them.

A Rallying Call.

I should like very much to see the same thing done in Cork, Limerick, Dundalk, Sligo, Drogheda, Tipperary and every town in Ireland where there are healthy-minded boys and girls. What has been done in Dublin, Athy, Mountrath, Listowel, Kiltimagh, Waterford, and such English cities and towns as London, Manchester, Bolton, Sutton Oak, Newton-le-Willows and other places can be done everywhere there are boys and girls. The Guild is not a place of hard work and exams. and all the other troubles of young lives. It is a place of play and prizes, of comradeship and kindliness and friendship, where boys and girls may laugh and jest and open their minds without fear of being laughed at or unfairly criticised. *Francis* will judge their efforts fairly, he has no favourites to whom prizes are awarded whether they are deserved or not, and the greater the number of his letters every month the happier he feels. If you have written a little story or a poem or an article or drawn a picture send it on to him for his opinion, and he will give it to you in a few kindly words. His prizes in the competitions are always worth winning, and who knows but one may be waiting here in the office of *The Cross* for you! Come along and compete and whether you win or don't you'll be glad you came.

A Hearty Wish.

I have rambled on from page to page and I am sure the Editor is wondering if old *Francis* is ever going to stop his chatter. When I get among the boys and girls of the Guild I feel just as young as themselves, and forget for the time being that I am steadily moving on towards old age. I'll take my leave of you now, with the hope warm in my heart that I'll meet every one of you at some time or other in the Guild of St. Gabriel during the coming twelve months. May Christmas bring you joy and peace and happiness of every kind and may the blessing of the Saviour Babe of Bethlehem be forever in your hearts and homes, is the sincere wish of

FRANCIS.

Nihil obstat :
JOANNES FITZPATRICK,
Censor Dep.

Imprimi Potest :
✠ED. J. BYRNE,
ARCHIEP.
DUBLINEN.

CONTENTS

	Page
"ROME THE WONDERFUL." Rev. Vincent Logan	1
THE ISLE OF WHITE. Rev. Raymund Saunders, C.P.	6
THE TWO ELLENS. Nora Ni Chathain	15
THE IRELAND OF TO-MORROW. M. J. McManus	22
THE MIDNIGHT FOOTSTEPS. Eleanor F. Kelly	25
BETHLEHEM'S STAR (Poem). Maurice R. Cussen	30
WHERE HIS GLORY DWELLETH. P. J. O'Connor Duffy	31
HIS HAPPY CHRISTMAS. Brian O hUiginn	34
CHRISTMAS AND THE YOUNG. Patrick Walshe, B.A.	37
MEMORIES OF THE COELIAN. Anonymous	39
TO MY LOVE THE CRUCIFIED (Poem). Maisie Mortell	42
ZENOBIA IS SAD. L. H. Dyer	43
THE PATH FOR ME (Poem). F. B. Straitwell	45
THE IRISH LABOURER. P. Ivers Rigney	46
THE APOSTOLATE OF THE CINEMA. Mary J. Stubbs	49
HER INHERITANCE. Minnie Mortimer	52
The Cross—1926	55
An Peap do bí ap Seaċpán. Muipip na Móna	56
PAGES FOR OUR YOUNG READERS. "Francis"	58
BOOK REVIEWS	60

ILLUSTRATIONS

SCENE IN ST. PETER'S, ROME, AT THE BEATIFICATION OF BLESSED V. M. STRAMBI	*Facing page*	1
THE GRAND HARBOUR, MALTA	,,	8
INTERIOR OF ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL, MALTA	,,	9
THE CHAPEL OF BONES, MALTA	,,	16
EASTERN VALLETTA, MALTA	,,	17
ROYAL ROAD, VALLETTA, MALTA	,,	24
THE OPERA HOUSE, MALTA	,,	25
MUSTA DOME, MALTA	,,	32
THE TEMPLE OF HAGIAR KIM, MALTA	,,	33
THE MOTHER HOUSE OF THE PASSIONISTS	,,	40
GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE PASSIONISTS	,,	41
CONTRIBUTORS TO *The Cross*—I.	,,	56
CONTRIBUTORS TO *The Cross*—II.	,,	57